

STARS AND STRIPES®

Bettany hopes to win with 'Wimbledon'

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Navy's Aaron Polanco

Volume 2, No.167 © EPSS 2004 MIDEAST EDITION FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2004

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DOD deploying 1,100 GIs to Afghanistan

Troops will assist with election security, report says Page 7



U.S., Iraq reopen war-ravaged span in Saddam's hometown

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Photos by The Washington Post

Left: First Infantry Division soldiers release balloons to mark the opening of the Tikrit Bridge. Right: The Tikrit Bridge, a vital link between Tikrit and the northern Iraqi city of Kirkuk, reopened Wednesday after a \$5.4 million U.S.-funded reconstruction project to repair damage by American warplanes last year.

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News Tracker ... What's new with old news

Nation

Airport screening: A new device that scans documents for traces of explosives has made its debut at four of the busiest U.S. airports, where officials will use it to screen selected passengers. Federal security screeners started testing the equipment Wednesday at O'Hare International Airport in Chicago.

It is also being to detect chemical residue on the surface of items such as wallets, passports and airline boarding passes.

Dozens of chemicals could trigger the scanners, including nitroglycerin taken by heart patients, fertilizer and gunpowder residue.

Peterson trial: Scott Peterson altered his appearance and loaded his car with his in the days before he was charged with murdering his pregnant wife, an agent with the state Department of Justice testified.

Special Agent Alex Quick, who tailed Peterson just before his arrest on April 18, 2003, a few days after the bodies of his wife and her fetus were found, testified Wednesday at Peterson's double-murder trial.

Quick, one of up to 10 agents who followed Peterson, told jurors that the former fertilizer salesman had altered his appearance, bleaching his dark hair and eyebrows blonde and growing a thick goatee.

Cuba sanctions: A day after moving to nullify the Bush administration's new rules restricting family travel to Cuba, the House on Wednesday voted to remove barriers to agriculture sales and student exchanges in the island nation.

But, as in past years, actions by both the House and Senate to ease decades of economic and social sanctions imposed on Cuba are expected to make little headway against an administration determined not to make life easier for the Fidel Castro government.

The White House has threatened to veto a \$90 billion Transportation and Treasury Department spending bill if it contains any language to weaken sanctions. The bill, for fiscal 2005 programs, passed 397-12.

"Bonnie and Clyde" trial: The sentencing for a woman who teamed up with her boyfriend in a string of "Bonnie and Clyde" bank robberies was postponed Wednesday after her attorney challenged federal sentencing guidelines.

Nova Guthrie, 31, pleaded guilty last year to three robberies. A plea agreement called for a sentence of nine to 11 years, taking into account additional crimes she was accused of carrying out but did not actually plead guilty to.

Guthrie's attorney Daniel Smith said the sentence was too long, citing a June ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court that said state judges cannot impose a longer sentence for offenses that were not proved in court or admitted to by the defendant.

Rosa Parks suit on OutKast song: Civil rights pioneer Rosa Parks, 91, has dementia and should not be forced to answer questions in her lawsuit over a rap song named for her, her lawyers said in a court filing.

Her lawyers said this summer she has been in frail health, but Monday's court filing is the first public description of her health problems.

Parks' lawsuit says the 1998 song "Rosa Parks" by hip-hop group OutKast violated her publicity and trademark rights and defamed her. It also says OutKast and record



International space station: From left, Russian cosmonaut Yuri Shargin and Salizhan Sharipov and American astronaut Leroy Chiao smile before the start of their training session at the mock-up of a Soyuz TMA space craft outside Moscow on Tuesday. The tenth crew slated to travel to the international space station in October entered the final stages of training, undergoing tests in a scale model of the orbiting station. The crew will conduct experiments to research new AIDS vaccines and plant growth, and work on new space vehicles that will help future missions to the moon and Mars.

company BMG exploited her name for commercial purposes. OutKast has been dismissed as a defendant.

Louisiana serial killer: A mental health expert has found Louisiana serial killings suspect Derrick Todd Lee to be mentally retarded, a lawyer said Tuesday in a new twist that could be used to try to spare Lee a possible death penalty.

Public defender Mike Mitchell made the announcement as jury selection continued for Lee's first-degree murder trial in the beating and stabbing death of 22-year-old Charlotte Murray Pace.

World

Germany library fire: A fire that hit a historic German library earlier this month destroyed twice as many books as previously thought, with some 50,000 works suffering irreparable fire damage, officials said Tuesday.

The Sept. 2 fire at Weimar's Duchess Anna Amalia Library tore through the roof and top floor of the 16th-century rococo palace housing the library, destroying classic books from the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries in the city where the nation's most revered writer, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, spent much of his life.

The books lost in the fire will be listed in an online database to be made available to the public, library director Michael Knoche said.

Charges against Mexican pop star: Minutes after Mexican pop idol Gloria Trevi was cleared of rape and kidnapping charges and freed from prison, she broke into song and announced she was releasing a new record.

But it may be months before Trevi returns to show business. Prosecutors on Wednesday were considering whether to appeal her acquittal in the border state of Chihuahua and she still faces criminal complaints in Mexico City.

Prosecutors accused the 36-year-old pop star, two of her backup singers and her man-

ager, Sergio Andrade, of luring young girls into their entourage and then sexually abusing them.

Hunting down war criminals: The British diplomat overseeing the peace process in Bosnia met Thursday with the newly appointed Bosnian Serb interior minister, who faces pressure to remove the biggest obstacle on the country's path toward European integration by apprehending war-crimes suspects at large for almost a decade.

Interior Minister Darko Matijasevic began his job last week after his predecessor was fired in June by Paddy Ashdown, the high representative of the international community in Bosnia-Herzegovina, as part of a purge of local officials suspected of supporting war criminals.

North Korea testing missile: Japan said Thursday it had obtained intelligence indicating that North Korea may be preparing to test fire a short-range missile that could reach most of the main Japanese islands, in what would be the latest provocation from the communist country.

Government officials convened an emergency task-force team in the prime minister's office after intelligence showed that North Korea appeared to be beefing up troops and equipment around missile launch bases, said Shigemitsu Terui, spokesman at the prime minister's office.

South Korea said missile-related activities had been detected in the North by the American and South Korean militaries.

Gaza Strip unrest: Three Palestinian gunmen infiltrated a fog-shrouded Israeli army post at dawn Thursday, killing three Israeli soldiers in a fierce gunbattle before they were shot to death, the army said.

Hours later, the Israeli army blew up an abandoned house near a Gaza Strip settlement, sending large plumes of smoke in the air.

The attack comes as Prime Minister Ariel Sharon faces mounting opposition to his plan to withdraw from all Gaza Strip and four West Bank settlements by September 2005.

Stories and photos from wire services



Trevi



AP photos

Above: Supporters of radical Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr keep watch for U.S. soldiers Wednesday in the Sadr City section of Baghdad. Left: U.S. soldiers take cover in a building after their Bradley fighting vehicle was disabled by a roadside bomb during a major incursion into Sadr City on Wednesday.

Cleric: Violence must not derail election

U.S. won't give in to Iraqi militant demands; Baghdad fighting continues

BY KIM HOUSEGO
The Associated Press

BAGHDAD, Iraq — Iraq's most powerful Shiite cleric, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, said that increasing violence must not be used as a pretext for delaying elections scheduled for late January.

Meanwhile, authorities insisted on Thursday that they won't give in to militants' demands to free female Iraqi prisoners despite the plea of a tearful British hostage begging Britain to save his life in a video released by his captors.

Al-Sistani "stresses the necessity of holding elections on time and the necessity of preparing the atmosphere... under international supervision to be credible and transparent," Hamed al-Khafaf, an aide to the ayatollah, said Thursday in a telephone interview from Beirut.

Iraq's Shiite majority is eager to hold elections since they expect to dominate whatever government emerges. U.N. chief Kofi Annan, however, has questioned whether elections can take place if violence does not ease.

A top U.S. general said Pentagon officials were not ruling out that more U.S. troops will be needed to secure January's elections.

"I think we will need more troops than we currently have," Gen. John Abizaid, commander of U.S. troops in the region, said Wednesday. But, he said, Pentagon officials believe the need will be filled by Iraqis or international forces.

When asked about Abizaid's comment, President Bush said Abizaid was in his office Thursday morning and did not mention the need for more troops. "But if he were to say that, I'd listen to him," Bush said.

Violence has intensified in recent weeks — with insurgents setting off near-daily car bombs. For a second day, U.S. forces battled Shiite militiamen in the Baghdad slum of Sadr City, with U.S. warplanes firing on insurgents. Hospital officials said at least one person was killed and 12 were wounded, many of them children.

U.S. deaths in Iraq

The Associated Press

As of Wednesday, 1,037 members of the U.S. military have died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003, according to the Defense Department. Of those, 787 died as a result of hostile action and 250 died of nonhostile causes. The figures include three military civilians.

The British military has reported 65 deaths; Italy, 19; Poland, 13; Spain, 11; Bulgaria, six; Ukraine, eight; Slovakia, three; Thailand, two; the Netherlands, two; and Denmark, El Salvador, Estonia, Hungary and Latvia have reported one death each.

Since May 1, 2003, when President Bush declared that major combat operations in Iraq had ended, 899 U.S. military members have died — 678 as a result of hostile action and 221 of nonhostile causes, according to the military's numbers Wednesday.

The latest deaths reported by the military:

■ A soldier died Wednesday when a vehicle bomb exploded near a traffic control point in Baghdad.

■ A soldier died Wednesday of injuries from an earlier attack in Mosul.

■ A soldier was killed Wednesday in an explosion during an attack near Tikrit.

The latest identifications reported by the military:

■ Marine Lance Cpl. Steven C. T. Cates, 22, Mount Juliet, Tenn., killed Monday in Anbar province, Iraq, assigned to 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force, Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms, Calif.

■ Army Spc. Joshua J. Henry, 21, Avonmore, Pa., killed Monday after his convoy was attacked near Sharqat, Iraq, assigned to the 1st Battalion, 7th Field Artillery Regiment, 1st Infantry Division, Schweinfurt, Germany.

States of wrecking efforts to save his brother's life after U.S. officials and Allawi quickly quashed a comment by an Iraqi official that one of the female prisoners would be freed by Thursday.

"That was a shadow of light in a big, long, dark, damp, filthy, cold tunnel. Now this has been sabotaged," Paul Bigley told the British Broadcasting Corp. on Thursday.

Bigley's wife appealed to the kidnappers to release her husband.

Sombat Bigley, a Thai woman, said she had seen the video with Bigley's plea for help.

"We have been married for seven years and I love him very much... I desperately want to be reunited with my husband," she said, reading a Thai-language statement at a press conference in Bangkok.

The 62-year-old Bigley was being held

by a militant group led by Jordanian-born terror mastermind Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. The group already has beheaded Americans Eugene Armstrong and Jack Hensley, demanding the release of all female prisoners in Iraq.

Two high-profile female security detainees are in custody — Rihab Rashid Taha, a scientist who became known as "Dr. Germ" for helping Iraq make weapons out of anthrax, and Huda Salih, Makiya Amash, a biotech researcher known as "Mrs. Anthrax."

A dispute broke out Wednesday when Iraqi Prime Minister Ayad Allawi's Justice Ministry announced that Taha would be freed on bail "Wednesday or Thursday" because she was no longer a threat to national security.

But the U.S. Embassy and Allawi quickly said the women would not be released soon. Allawi underlined that U.S. and Iraqi authorities would not give in to hostage-takers' demands.

"We have not been negotiating and we will not negotiate with terrorists on the release of hostages," Allawi told The Associated Press. "Really, my heart goes out for the victims of terrorism, and their families as we are trying to do our best to ensure the release of them."

Iraqi national security adviser Qasim Dawoud said Thursday that while the status of prisoners — including Taha — is under review, there was "no question" of making decisions on them "in the light of the demands of a terrorist group which has taken three hostages and criminally and barbarically murdered two of them."

In another hostage drama, two statements surfaced on the Internet from different groups, each claiming to have killed two kidnapped Italian aid workers. The second statement said a video of the slaying of the two women, Simona Pari and Simona Torretta, would be made public, but Italy cast doubt on both claims' authenticity.

"Italian intelligence services... believe these claims to be completely unreliable," Enzo Bianco, the head of the parliament commission overseeing secret services, told Italian news agencies.

Allawi thanks Americans for Iraq sacrifices

BY JENNIFER LOVEN
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Standing beside Iraq's interim leader, President Bush contended Thursday that insurgents could "plot and plan attacks elsewhere, in America and other free nations," if the United States pulled out.

Bush said his top commander there has not asked for more troops but if he did, "I'd listen to him."

After meeting with interim Prime Minister Ayad Allawi, Bush said he expects violence in Iraq to escalate as the country moves toward elections scheduled for January. Even so, Allawi said more foreign troops are not needed.

"To have more troops, we don't need," he said, suggesting that Iraq instead should train its own security forces.

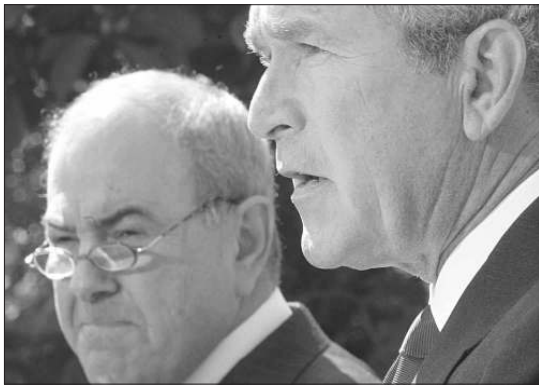
Allawi addressed Congress — one of his first to a wider audience than those in Iraq — before meeting with Bush.

"We Iraqis know that Americans have made and continue to make enormous sacrifices to liberate Iraq, to assure Iraq's freedom," Allawi said. "I have come here to thank you and to promise you that your sacrifices are not in vain."

Allawi told the joint meeting of Congress that his country is moving successfully past the war that ousted Saddam Hussein and vowed that elections will take place next year as scheduled, "because Iraqis want elections on time."

He cautioned, however, that the election may not come off perfectly. But he assured it will be free and fair, "a giant step" in Iraq's political evolution.

In a clear jab at Democratic op-



President Bush and Iraq's prime minister, Ayad Allawi, hold a joint news conference Thursday in the Rose Garden at the White House. Allawi, left, says he shares the view that things are getting better in his country.

ponent John Kerry, Bush said the United States must remain in Iraq to fight insurgents, who he said are part of the global terror threat.

"If we stop fighting the terrorists in Iraq, they would be free to plot and plan attacks elsewhere, in America and other free na-

tions," he said.

Kerry has said that U.S. forces can prevail in Iraq if led properly, and he's set a goal of beginning to withdraw troops within six months of taking office and of being out of Iraq in four years. [See related story on page 8]

Meanwhile, Gen. John Abizaid,

commander of U.S. troops in the Middle East, said Wednesday it was possible that more U.S. troops would be needed to secure Iraq's elections, but that Iraq and perhaps international troops may be able to do the job instead. "I think we will need more troops than we currently have," Abizaid said.

Raking it in



JENNIFER LINDSEY/Courtesy of U.S. Air Force

From left, Airman 1st Class Adam Will, Airman 1st Class Jonathan Norton and Staff Sgt. William Marley rake concrete before Airman 1st Class Michael Shannon uses a power screed to finish the job. The four are deployed to Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan as part of the 455th Expeditionary Operations Group Civil Engineer Flight.

U.S. to return enemy combatant to Saudi Arabia but limit travel

BY CURT ANDERSON
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A U.S. citizen held since late 2001 as an enemy combatant will be sent back to Saudi Arabia under an agreement between the Justice Department and his lawyers.

Yaser Esam Hamdi must renounce his American citizenship and agree never to travel to certain countries under the agreement announced Wednesday. But Hamdi, whose case led to a Supreme Court decision limiting the president's powers to indefinitely hold wartime combatants, will not face criminal charges.

"I am gratified at the prospect that Mr. Hamdi's return to Saudi Arabia and his family is now only days away," Hamdi's lawyer, fed-

eral public defender Frank Dunham Jr., said in a statement.

Hamdi, born in Baton Rouge, La., and raised in Saudi Arabia, will be flown by the Defense Department to Saudi Arabia as soon as transportation can be arranged. He was being held in a Navy brig in Charleston, S.C. The exact timing of his return was uncertain.

Saudi officials say he faces no charges there.

The agreement negotiated by Dunham and the Justice Department stipulates that Hamdi is forbidden from traveling to Afghanistan, Iraq, Israel, Pakistan, Syria, the West Bank and Gaza Strip and the United States.

Justice Department spokesman Mark Corallo said the restrictions are meant to ensure Hamdi

cannot again take up arms against the United States or its allies. Corallo said Hamdi no longer posed a threat to the United States and no longer has intelligence value, leading to the decision to release him.

"As we have repeatedly stated, the United States has no interest in detaining enemy combatants beyond the point that they pose a threat to the U.S. and our allies," Corallo said.

Sen. Patrick Leahy of Vermont, the senior Democrat on the Senate Judiciary Committee, questioned Wednesday how the Justice Department could "release and send to Saudi Arabia someone they said was so dangerous that he had to be held for years in a military stockade and could not be allowed to consult with a lawyer."

Third Guantanamo spy case falls apart for military

BY KIM CURTIS
The Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — The military dropped an espionage charge against a Muslim interpreter accused of spying at a camp for terrorism detainees in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, the third such case to fall apart this year.

Senior Airman Ahmad Al Halabi pleaded guilty to four "minor infractions," said his lawyer,

Donald Rehkopf Jr.

Specifically, he admitted to taking two photos of his workplace and lying about it. He also brought a classified document home without locking it up, which led to a guilty plea to a charge of "conduct prejudicial to good order and discipline."

The judge, Air Force Col. Barbara Brand, approved the plea deal during a hearing Wednesday at Travis Air Force Base, about

an hour northeast of San Francisco. His sentence on the remaining charges was not yet announced.

Prosecutor Lt. Col. Brian Wheeler disagreed that the convictions were minor. "He took secret documents to his residence, he mailed them to himself," Wheeler said outside court. "It is, as a matter of law, serious. 'Secret' means serious damage to national security if it gets out."

Al Halabi, 25, a naturalized American who was born in Syria, was accused of trying to deliver messages from detainees at Guantanamo to his homeland. He was arrested last July as he headed to Syria to get married.

Before he was sent to Guantanamo Bay for temporary duty, Al Halabi was a supply clerk at Travis Air Force Base.

He was initially accused of attempting to deliver nearly 200

messages from detainees to an unidentified Syrian. But the case has been falling apart for months. Without explanation, prosecutors in December dropped several charges, including an "aiding the enemy" accusation that carried the death penalty.

The Air Force also recently acknowledged that all but one of the documents found in Al Halabi's possession when he was arrested were not classified after all.

War-damaged span over Tigris is reopened

BY JACKIE SPINNER

The Washington Post

TIKRIT, Iraq — The Americans spared few expenses on ceremony Wednesday: Balloons soared over the Tigris River, a U.S. Army band pumped out the Iraqi national anthem, and red, white and black ribbons — representing the colors of the Iraqi flag — stretched across the newly repaired Tikrit Bridge.

Tribal sheiks in traditional robes and municipal officials in dark Western suits lined up to march across the bridge to formally mark the completion of the \$5.4 million, U.S.-funded project.

An Iraqi police car began slowly leading the procession toward a group of waiting Americans troops from the 1st Infantry Division and representatives of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and its main contractor in Iraq, Bechtel.

So it went on the day that the Tikrit Bridge reopened, 18 months after the U.S. warplanes bombed it in order to cut a crucial transportation link between the cities of Tikrit and Kirkuk in northern Iraq.

The two-lane span is the third war-damaged bridge that USAID has restored and reopened. The agency has surveyed 40 others but has no immediate plans to fix them, citing a Bush administration decision to shift some money away from public works and reconstruction to security programs in an effort to deal with an unrelenting insurgency.

The pace of reconstruction has left many Iraqis and their new leaders dissatisfied; the work continues, but at a pace that they consider disappointing.

"We need more projects," Hamad Humood Shaqti, the governor of Tikrit, said even as he expressed pleasure at the reopening of the bridge. "We need more bridges, more hospitals. We need sewage systems in every village and town in the city."



LATVP

The Tikrit Bridge, a vital link between Tikrit and the northern Iraqi city of Kirkuk, reopened on Wednesday after a \$5.4-million U.S.-funded reconstruction project to repair damage from American warplanes last year.

The Bush administration asked Congress this year for permission to divert \$3.5 billion from public works to other long-term rebuilding projects to security needs, including the training and equipping of additional Iraqi police. Part of the reallocated money would go toward addressing unemployment, planning elections and repairing facilities for oil production, the nation's single-most important source of revenue.

At the bridge ceremony on Wednesday, James Stephenson, the USAID director in Iraq, said his agency would actually get a boost from the reallocation, which he said was not yet finalized.

The reconstruction of the bridge, which spans the Tigris in the hometown of deposed President Saddam Hussein, reflects many of the challenges of rebuilding Iraq, where

harsh physical conditions and insurgent attacks can complicate even simple projects.

The bridge had suffered major damage in two places, requiring replacement of six girders, its deck, guard rails and lights. And there was another problem, said Terry Valenzano, Iraq program director for Bechtel National Inc., the San Francisco-based contractor for USAID. "We couldn't find the original plans," he said.

Work started 11 months ago and initially progressed without major disruption. Insurgents at the time were targeting U.S. troops and their Iraqi allies. They largely left U.S. reconstruction companies alone and were not targeting Iraqi laborers.

This spring, the river rose to flood levels, washing away one of the piers and sweeping away some scaffolding.

By then, insurgent attacks in the area

had intensified. The U.S. military base next to the bridge was being hit by mortars and other weapons.

About a month ago, three employees of 77 Construction, the Kirkuk-based Iraqi subcontractor on the project, were ambushed and killed on their way to the work site, said Umil Talu, project manager for the company. A fourth worker was shot while working on the bridge.

Over the weekend, Shaqti, Tikrit's governor, survived an apparent assassination attempt after his convoy came under fire, news agencies reported. On Wednesday, a U.S. soldier was killed by a roadside bomb three miles south of Tikrit.

In spite of the difficulties, the bridge reopened, and the governor of Tikrit pledged that work and reconstruction would continue. "We are waiting for more promising projects in the future," Shaqti said.

Reporter recounts becoming casualty

BY DENIS D. GRAY

The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — An ear-shattering blast, a swirl of dust, a sting and I was unofficially awarded the first purple heart in the platoon.

"You're bad luck," joked soldiers of the 2nd Platoon, Company B, after a mortar round struck 30 feet from our Humvee and a tiny sliver of shrapnel punctured my left arm.

Just moments earlier, the Humvee chief had decided to save fuel by shutting off the air conditioning and opening our armored-plated doors, leaving us partially exposed.

Then the light mortar round, the day's first, slammed into a compound of Jolan Club, an abandoned sports complex, alleged to be a hangout and weapons storage site of the rebel al-Mahdi Army.

The platoon of the 1st Cavalry Division was taking part in a search Wednesday for arms caches in Sadr City, a Baghdad slum rife with insurgents.



AP

A supporter of radical Shiite cleric, Muqtada al-Sadr, keeps watch for U.S. soldiers in the Sadr City slum in Baghdad on Wednesday. An Associated Press reporter was the first to be hit in the platoon he was riding with Wednesday in Sadr City.

Supported by helicopter gunships and airplanes, U.S. and Iraqi troops fought gunbattles through the night and into the day.

But instead of weapons, soldiers bursting into the walled Jolan complex found shoddy weightlifting equipment, empty rooms and an outdoor basketball court with no backboards or hoops.

The troops occupied the compound through the morning, taking occasional sniper bullets as explosions and exchanges of fire rocked the slum around them.

U.S. jet fighters screamed overhead at rooftop level.

Just as the order came to move out of the compound, the mortar round struck — unexpected because they don't whistle in like artillery shells.

A medic extracted the shrapnel fragment from my arm and delivered it to me in a souvenir plastic packet while the soldiers joked around.

Every unit in their battalion has sustained casualties during its seven months in Baghdad.

For Navy corpsmen, patients are comrades

BY MIKE DORNING

Chicago Tribune

RAMADI, Iraq — It had come to this: Miguel Escalera was grateful for the rocket-propelled grenade exploding overhead.

Enveloped in darkness in the midst of a midnight firefight, the 23-year-old Navy corpsman was crouching down on the bed of a truck, frantically feeling along the body of a wounded Marine. With bullets whizzing past him, he dared not turn on a flashlight and make himself an easier target.

He had to rely on his sense of touch, groping for the feel of warm liquid as he searched for a bullet wound.

And that's when a flash of light revealed the blood soaking through the wounded lance corporal's uniform.

"The RPG actually helped me," Escalera said.

Petty Officer 3rd Class Escalera made it through the ambush that night. And so, despite their wounds, did each of the Marines under his care.

The medics who serve among the Marines in Iraq experience war in a unique way. They bear the duty not only to kill but also to save.

Medics — called corpsmen in the Marines — serve on the front lines.

They walk the same patrols as the men they treat. They are showered with shrapnel from the same roadside bombs. They bunk together, eat together and sometimes die together.

At times under fire and often under the most trying conditions, they struggle to hold on to life in cases that might challenge top-level trauma centers. Confronted with the most gruesome wounds, they improvise care in the backs of Humvees, on the hard-packed dirt of open fields and on the tile floors of homes quickly seized for cover in the midst of combat.

The men who bleed and die in their arms are not just patients; more often than not, they are friends.

Sometimes, it is also a corpsman's duty to go through the bodies of the dead, to feed for a heartbeat one final time before closing the eyes of a fallen Marine and sending him on for the journey home.

There's a rule among the corpsmen: show weakness or grief and the warriors around you may lose confidence in the men who are supposed to save them.



Soldiers from Southern European Task Force's 173rd Airborne Brigade interact with role players in Afghan garb Wednesday at the Combat Maneuver Training Center in Hohenfels, Germany. The 173rd Airborne soldiers were gearing up for a mission rehearsal exercise for their deployment to Afghanistan next spring.

PHOTOS BY RICK EMERY/Stars and Stripes

SETAF readies for deployment through role-playing exercises

BY RICK EMERY
Stars and Stripes

HOHENFELS, Germany — The Southern European Task Force's 173rd Airborne Brigade and supporting units are practicing at the Combat Maneuver Training Center for an Afghanistan deployment next spring.

About 2,000 soldiers have been honing peacekeeping and urban combat skills at the center since Sept. 16. From Oct. 1-10, the soldiers will conduct a mission rehearsal exercise.

The exercise portion allows the soldiers to put all the skills they practice over the first two weeks into play in scenarios with more than 300 role-players from the training area dressed in traditional Afghanistani clothing.

It incorporates scenarios modeled after events that have been happening in Afghanistan right up until the training began.

Observer-controllers from the training area deployed to Afghanistan to bring back information on what has been happening with U.S. servicemembers there, said Lt. Col. Darin Blancett, deputy operations officer for CMTC Command Group.

Primarily, the soldiers will practice working with role-playing tribal leaders and residents of mock villages in the training area.

However, the training area also boasts four new manmade caves for soldiers to practice cave-clearing skills they may need in Afghanistan.

Other scenarios the soldiers might encounter include reacting to makeshift bombs.

"We're anticipating everything [during the exercise] from tribal leader ethnic disputes to terrorist attacks," said Maj. Bill Butler, executive officer for the 173rd Airborne.

"This is not going to be a company or battalion attacking a hill. Squad leaders, platoon leaders and company commanders will be interacting with people in these villages to figure out their needs and try to meet their needs."

Maj. Bill Butler
Executive officer
173rd Airborne

Butler said the training is vital for the brigade, which has new leaders in its personnel, security, operations and logistics sections.

The brigade's soldiers, such as Pfc. Valerie Saenz, say the train-

ing is helpful. The Afghanistan deployment will be her first.

"It's extensive, we have long days of training," Saenz said. "I am starting to feel more prepared because of the training."

Other soldiers benefit from feedback from those who were on the brigade's Operation Iraqi Freedom I deployment.

"Everything we are doing here is close to what we will be doing downrange," said Spc. William Hankins, also from the 173rd Airborne. "People on the previous deployment have been giving us an idea of what the tempo will be like."

Although the 173rd Airborne soldiers have had little rest between the deployments, Butler said morale is good.

"The morale within the brigade is fine," he said. "This is about being a nation at war fighting the war on terror. The soldiers expect to deploy."

"This is why most of us joined the Army, to fight for American principles."

E-mail: rick.ernert@emery@mail.strips.esd.mil



Role-players at the Combat Maneuver Training Center conduct their afternoon prayers at a mosque in the mock village of Deh Rawod.

Author offers to cancel speech in wake of boycott

German military pulled out of Land Combat Expo after critical column

BY JON R. ANDERSON
Stars and Stripes

HEIDELBERG, Germany — A controversial author invited to speak at the Army's annual professional development symposium in Europe next week has offered to cancel his appearance in the wake of a German boycott of the event.

Ralph Peters, a retired Army lieutenant colonel, a writer and frequent lecturer on military affairs, is slated to speak at U.S. Army Europe's three-day Land Combat Expo on the future of warfare.

"I have made an offer to withdraw if that's what USAREUR thinks is best. And there will be no hard feelings against USAREUR on my part," Peters told Stars and Stripes on Tuesday.

"The important thing is the expo," he added. "It's not me, it's not the German tanks. It's the troops."

A USAREUR spokeswoman confirmed Peters' offer.

"USAREUR's invitation to him to participate as a guest speaker at the expo still stands," said Lt. Col. Christine Crichton.

Officials, however, say they hope the Germans will reconsider.

"We continue to discuss the issue with the German command," said Crichton.

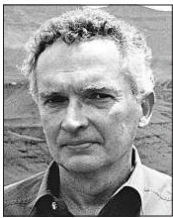
German officials say they were unaware of Peters' offer.

"Our commander doesn't know anything about this," said Col. Wolfgang Feit, spokesman for Lt. Gen. Axel Bürgener, command of Germany's land forces.

Feit declined to speculate on whether German leaders would reconsider their decision to boycott the expo should Peters withdraw.

Peters infuriated German officials with a scathing column in the New York Post last month that was critical of the German government, German civilian employees who work for the U.S. military and wide swaths of German society.

"The primary reason why German politicians want American troops to remain is that they've been fleecing us for a half century. Some flunky from the German Embassy may respond with bogus claims about how our presence is subsidized, but the truth is that American tax dollars go to lazy, arrogant, corrupt German employees who work on our bases and over whom we have little control," wrote Peters. "The Germans aren't worried about global security. They're worried



Army Lt. Col. (Ret.) Ralph Peters

about their dismal unemployment numbers."

Peters served in Germany for 10 years while on active duty.

"I saw up close how German farmers filed outrageous claims for 'maneuver damage,' how German landlords rented substandard housing to our military families at inflated rates, then exploited the system to renovate slums our soldiers had 'ruined,'" Peters continued in his column. "Even the German railroads gouged us whenever we had to deploy. It's time for America to stop subsidizing the welfare state on the Rhine."

The German authorities responded on Tuesday, telling U.S. Army leaders in Europe that their military would boycott the expo and cancel their participation in the event, which included some five military vehicles and displays.

"We do not want any verbal confrontation between any German soldier and this guest speaker," Col. Hans Kling, liaison officer between the German and USAREUR said Wednesday, adding "We do not want to provide a platform for the speaker to do this in the presence of German soldiers."

Peters said the move amounts to a "German effort to pressure USAREUR into canceling my appearance; it's a thinly disguised effort at censorship. Still, I want to do what's right for the expo and the troops."

Despite the uproar, however, Peters makes no apologies for the column.

"This just proves they still have a deep fascist streak," Peters said. "It's really a shame that none of my books are in print in Germany, because then they could burn them like they did in the 1930s."

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U.S. to deploy 1,100 troops to Afghanistan

Members of 82nd Airborne begin to arrive for election security

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon is sending up to 1,100 soldiers to Afghanistan to assist in security before the Oct. 9 presidential election there, according to a report in Thursday's USA Today.

The deployment is in response to growing violence as the election nears, the report states. More than 900 people have died in political violence across Afghanistan this year.

The troops from the Army's 82nd Airborne Division began arriving in Afghanistan on Wednesday, The Associated Press reported. This brings the number of U.S. troops in that country to more than 18,000.

Maj. Amy Hannah, a spokesperson for the 82nd Airborne, told USA Today that troops have begun leaving Fort Bragg,

N.C., for Afghanistan, and "there is no specific time period" for their deployment.

The British are reportedly considering sending up to 8,000 soldiers to Afghanistan. However, this would be offset by the withdrawal of an equal contingent from Iraq. British soldiers in Afghanistan number only a few hundred among the NATO-led international security force.

Afghan President Hamid Karzai had requested 5,300 NATO troops to help provide security in the run-up to the vote, USA Today reported. But, only 1,800 have been promised, and most have not yet arrived. They will augment the 6,500 NATO forces now in Kabul and some nearby villages.

Before the deployment of the 82nd Airborne troops, there were about 17,900 U.S. troops in Afghanistan, backed by Army

and Marine helicopter gunships and Air Force B-1 and A-10 aircraft. At least 97 U.S. troops have been killed and about 360 have been wounded.

U.S. troops killed three militants in fighting in southern Afghanistan, while a rocket attack on the main American base north of the capital wounded a U.S. soldier, officials said Thursday.

Two suspected Taliban died in a gunbattle with American forces late Wednesday in Uruzgan province, a hot spot for U.S. troops battling Taliban militants, the local mayor said.

Shooting broke out near a village called Poshakan after the two men refused to stop their motorbike when asked by U.S. forces, said Mayor Haji Obaidullah.

He identified one of the men as local Taliban commander Mullah Dur Mohammad.

Obaidullah said Afghan forces arrested another Taliban commander, Mullah Usman, during a search operation on Tuesday in nearby Kalatay village.

The fighting came on the heels of a series of incidents Monday that left three U.S. soldiers dead and 14 wounded, underlining Afghanistan's fragile security less than three weeks before national elections, which Taliban rebels have vowed to disrupt.

The Department of Defense identified the dead as Spc. Wesley R. Wells, 21, of Libertyville, Ill., Staff Sgt. Robert S. Goodwin, 35, of Albany, Ga., and Staff Sgt. Tony B. Olaes, 30, of Wallhalla, S.C.

In another incident on Wednesday, three rockets were fired at Bagram Air Base, the hub of U.S. military operations.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

Rumsfeld to outline plans for military transformation

By ROBERT BURNS

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Over the next decade, the U.S. military will abandon 35 percent of the Cold War-era bases and buildings it uses abroad, even as it seeks to expand a network of bare-bones

sites in Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Eastern Europe to help fight terrorism.

Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld was outlining the plan Thursday to the Senate Armed Services Committee.

In a report to Congress, the Pentagon offered details of the "global

defense posture." The planned changes, once completed, will result in "the most profound re-ordering" of U.S. military forces overseas since the current global arrangements were set 50 years ago, according to the report.

The most widely noted aspect

of the plan, which was announced in broad terms last month by President Bush, is the withdrawal of 70,000 U.S. troops and 100,000 of their family members from bases in Germany and South Korea. That has gained attention in part because it means fewer U.S. bases probably will be shuttered in the 2005 round of base closings than if there were no withdrawal.

Less well understood is that even while troops will return to the United States from Germany and South Korea, the Pentagon will be building up its network of "forward operating sites," sometimes called "lily pad" bases. The Pentagon is seeking maximum flexibility in the decades ahead in responding to terrorism and other potential threats, including those to oil supplies. So the military wants a range of basing and access agreements with as many countries as possible and in as many regions as it can.

It foresees three types of overseas arrangements:

■ Main operating bases with permanently stationed forces and family support structures. Examples include Ramstein Air Base in Germany, Camp Humphreys in South Korea and Kaduna Air Base in Okinawa, Japan.

■ Forward operating sites maintained by a limited number of military personnel and possibly stored equipment. These sites will support rotational rather than permanently stationed forces. Examples are Soto Cano Air Base in Honduras and Thumrait

and Masirah Island air bases in Oman.

■ Even more austere sites, which the Pentagon calls "cooperative security locations." With little or no permanent U.S. presence, these may be maintained by contractor or host nation personnel. They will allow access for U.S. forces in special circumstances and be a focal point for regional cooperation. An example is the air base in Dakar, Senegal, and Entebbe airport in Uganda.

Among locations the Pentagon is considering adding:

■ The island nation of Sao Tome and Principe, off the coast of West Africa. It is among the places Gen. Charles Wald, deputy commander of U.S. European Command, has mentioned as a potential U.S. forward operating site, but not a base. Sao Tome holds a strategic position in the Gulf of Guinea from which the U.S. military could monitor the movement of oil tankers and protect oil platforms.

■ In Bulgaria, which joined the U.S.-led NATO alliance this year, the Sarafovo and Graf Ignatievo air fields could serve as bases for U.S. troops to deploy on rotational training tours.

■ In Romania, the Americans have shown interest in the Mihail Kogalniceanu Air Base, the Babadag training range and the Black Sea military port of Mangalia.

■ In Australia, where Pentagon officials have said they have no plans for permanent bases, U.S. forces likely will conduct joint training with Australian forces.



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Former captured soldier retires from Army

ALAMOGORDO, N.M. — Joseph Hudson of Alamogordo, one of the soldiers captured by Iraqi forces last year and held as a prisoner of war for 22 days, has retired from the Army.

Hudson took a medical retirement last week. He was a corporal with the 507th Maintenance Company from Fort Bliss, Texas.

The company was ambushed by Iraqi forces on March 23, 2003, when it was separated from its convoy. Hudson was shot in the buttocks and injured by shrapnel in his ribs during the capture. He and four others were rescued by Marines on April 13. Hudson said he retired because he's "tired of military service." "All of the work I did every day reminded me of... Iraq," Hudson told the El Paso Times.

From The Associated Press

IN THE STATES

Kerry says Bush is avoiding reality of Iraq



Democratic presidential candidate Sen. John Kerry is interviewed by Spencer Smith, 11, of Freedom News Network, before Kerry departs Wednesday for Columbus, Ohio, from West Palm Beach, Fla. FNN is the TV station for Freedom Shores Elementary School in Boynton Beach, Fla.

BY NEDRA PICKLER

The Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry said Thursday that Iraq's Ayad Allawi was sent before Congress to put the "best face" on a Bush administration policy that has gone wrong.

Shortly after Allawi, the interim government's prime minister, gave a rosy portrayal of progress toward peace in Iraq, Kerry said the assessment contradicted Allawi's own statements as well as the reality on the ground.

"I think the prime minister is, obviously, contradicting his own statement of a few days ago, where he said the terrorists are pouring into the country," Kerry said. "The prime minister and the president are here obviously to put their best face on the policy, but the fact is that the CIA estimates, the reporting, the ground operations and the troops all tell a different story."

Kerry was referring to comments Allawi made Sunday on ABC's "This Week." But Allawi also expressed optimism about the mission in that appearance.

"Foreign terrorists are still pouring in, and they're trying to inflict damage on Iraq to undermine Iraq and to undermine the process, democratic process in Iraq, and, indeed, this is their last stand," Allawi said. "So they are putting a very severe fight on Iraq. We are winning. We will continue to win. We are going to prevail."

Allawi told a joint meeting of Congress Thursday that democratic elections will take place in Iraq in January as scheduled, but Kerry said that was unrealistic.

"The United States and the Iraqis have retreated from whole areas of Iraq," Kerry told reporters. "There are no-go zones in Iraq today. You can't hold an election in a no-go zone."

Kerry said President George W. Bush should convene a summit of international leaders to ask for their help in Iraq. He also said the president missed an opportunity to get foreign support during two days of diplomacy at the United Nations this week.

"The president skeddaddled out of New York so quickly he barely had time to talk to any leaders," Kerry said.

Kerry's remarks come one day after he told The Associated Press that Bush's state-

ment that a "handful" of people were willing to kill to stop progress in Iraq was a blunder that showed he was avoiding reality.

George Bush left Osama bin Laden escapee at Bora Bora, "Kerry said in the brief interview Wednesday. "George Bush retreated from Fallujah and other communities in Iraq which are now overrun with terrorists and threaten our troops. And George Bush said on the record we can't win the war on terror."

"And even today, he blundered again saying there are only a handful of terrorists in Iraq," Kerry said. "I think he's living in a make believe world."

Bush, campaigning in Pennsylvania on Wednesday, said: "It's hard to help a country go from tyranny to elections to peace when there are a handful of people who are willing to kill in order to stop the process. And that's what you're seeing on the TV screens. You know, these people can't be beat us militarily."

White House press secretary Scott McClellan said Thursday, "It only took 19 people to take down the World Trade Center towers and kill 3,000 people." He said that in Iraq, "you've seen how a small number of suicide bombers can have a dramatic effect."

Goss confirmed as CIA director

BY KATHERINE PFLERGER

SHRADER
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Republican-led Senate approved President Bush's choice to head the CIA, Rep. Porter Goss, over protests from some Democrats who said he has too many Republican ties for a job that requires independence.

The nomination of the Florida congressman, who had planned to retire after eight terms, was confirmed Wednesday by a vote of 77-17. A former CIA and Army intelligence officer during the 1960s, Goss would be only the second congressman to take over the helm of the CIA, following former President and House member George H.W. Bush, the current president's father.

President Bush, who nominated Goss to the post, called him "a leader with strong experience in intelligence and in the fight

against terrorists" and "the right man" to take over the agency as the administration implements intelligence reforms.

Goss, 65, will lead an intelligence community that has faced intense criticism for failures prior to the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks and for its prewar criticism for its failure to warn of the U.S. intelligence network have become more focused and made changes to address international terrorism and other threats.

During six hours of debate, Sen. Jay Rockefeller, the senior Democrat on the intelligence

panel, questioned whether Goss would be politically objective and outlined a series of attacks Goss has made on the Democratic Party and its presidential nominee, Sen. John Kerry.

He included what Rockefeller considered unfair accusations from Goss that Kerry led the way to "deep and devastating" intelligence budget cuts in the 1990s.

Rockefeller said the law requires the director of central intelligence to provide timely and objective intelligence, independent of political considerations.

While Goss has promised not to be a partisan Republican as CIA director, "I must vote on his record. I cannot vote on his promise."

Should Kerry be elected president, he would be expected to pick a different CIA director. Neither Kerry nor his running mate, Sen. John Edwards voted on the confirmation.



Goss

Fla. high court strikes down law to keep brain-damaged woman alive

BY JACKIE HALLIFAX

The Associated Press

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — The Florida Supreme Court on Thursday struck down a law that was rushed through the Legislature last fall to keep a severely brain-damaged woman hooked up to a feeding tube against her husband's wishes.

The unanimous court said the law that kept Terri Schiavo alive violated the separation of powers between the judicial branch and the legislative and executive branches.

Lower courts had ruled that Michael Schiavo could have the tube removed, but the Legislature passed the law to overrule the courts.

Gov. Jeb Bush then used the law to order the tube reinstated.

It was not immediately known if the ruling would clear the way for the tube's final removal. An attorney for Terri Schiavo's parents, who want her kept alive, would not speculate. Michael Schiavo's attorneys did not immediately return calls seeking comment.

"It is without question an inva-

sion of the authority of the judicial branch for the Legislature to pass a law that allows the executive branch to interfere with the final judgment of the courts in a case," Chief Justice Barbara Pariente wrote for the court. "That is precisely what occurred here."

Terri Schiavo, who lies in a nursing home, can breathe on her own but relies on a feeding and hydration tube to live. Courts have concluded she is in a "persistent vegetative state," but maneuvering over her fate has produced a closely watched right-to-die fight.

Popular tax cuts may be extended by Bush

BY MARTIN CRUTSINGER

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Legislation to extend several popular middle class tax cuts cleared a House-Senate conference committee Wednesday, paving the way for President Bush's desk within days, handing him a major legislative victory in the closing weeks of the presidential campaign.

The \$145.9 billion package marked the fourth significant tax cut package that the president has championed since taking office.

The bill was considered must-pass legislation by Republicans because without it provisions dealing with the child tax credit, relieving the marriage penalty and providing an expanded 10 percent tax bracket would have expired at the end of this year.

The House was expected to take up the measure as early as Thursday. Republican leaders predicted it would win Senate passage either Friday or early next week.

President Bush has made it a priority to make sure that families keep more of their own money, and we intend to deliver on that priority," House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Bill Thomas, R-Calif., said after a joint House-Senate conference committee completed work on the bill late Wednesday.

While Democrats have originally argued that the government could not afford the price tag of extending the tax cuts in light of soaring budget deficits, leaders of both parties expected the legislation to pass easily in both chambers.

Bush had rejected a deal in

July that would have extended the tax cuts for just one year and held out for them by closing various corporate tax loopholes. He paid out instead for a five-year extension in a gamble that opposition would lessen the closer lawmakers got to the November elections.

All members of the House must stand for re-election on Nov. 2, as will two dozen senators.

Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle, D-S.D., who is in a tight re-election race, said last week that he could support the longer extension and would not insist on the tax cuts being paid for by raising taxes in other areas.

The tax package would keep the child tax credit at \$1,000, instead of letting it drop to \$700. It also would continue an expanded 10 percent tax rate that lowers tax bills for virtually all taxpayers. A third provision would continue to offer married couples relief from the so-called marriage penalty that can take a bigger tax bite from some couples than if they were single taxpayers.

The child tax credit was extended for five years, while the marriage penalty relief was extended for four years and the expanded 10 percent tax bracket for six years.

In addition to those three provisions, the tax package would extend for one year current relief from the alternative minimum tax, which was intended to make sure that wealthy Americans did not escape paying taxes by taking deductions for more middle income taxpayers.

The cost of the middle class tax relief was put at \$13.14 billion over 10 years.

House seeks more federal anti-terror powers

By JESSE J. HOLLAND

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — House leaders want to increase federal investigators' anti-terrorism powers similar to a Patriot Act II draft proposal from last year, as senators make final changes in their legislation addressing the Sept. 11 commission's recommendations.

In a draft of the House GOP legislation obtained by The Associated Press, many of the provisions were similar to the draft copy of the "Domestic Security Enhancement Act of 2003" that a nonprofit group said had leaked out of the Justice Department in January 2003.

Justice Department officials said at that time that they had made no final decision on the legislation, and never submitted it to Congress.

But many of the anti-terrorism provisions of that draft show up in the House dis-

cussion draft section on terrorism prevention and prosecution that is part of the proposed House legislation.

Among the provisions are measures on the deportation of immigrants who become members of or help terrorist groups, required pretrial detention for terrorism suspects, warrants against non-citizens even when a target can't be tied directly to a foreign power, and enhanced penalties for threats or attempts to use chemical or nuclear weapons against the United States, including attacks through the mail system.

A spokesman for House Majority Leader Tom DeLay, R-Texas, said Wednesday that House members still were working on a final version of the legislation. A Justice Department spokesman said they had not seen the House draft.

"This draft bill deals directly with the recommendations of the 9/11 commission report," said Jeff Lingen, spokesman for the House Judiciary Committee.

But an American Civil Liberties Union official said her organization also saw similarities between the House bill and the draft proposal. "Nowhere in its recommendations does the 9/11 Commission ask Congress to pass a sequel to the Patriot Act," said Laura W. Murphy, director of the ACLU Washington legislative office.

Senate Democratic leader Tom Daschle of South Dakota said that adding "extremely divisive and counterproductive language" would make it harder to get a final bill through Congress. "Whether or not we ought to debate the Patriot Act is certainly a matter for debate," he said Thursday.

Republicans have hailed the Patriot Act as a critical tool in the post-Sept. 11 war on terrorism, while many Democrats charge it authorizes heavy-handed infringements on civil liberties.

The House is expected to begin marking up the far-reaching bill next week.

The Senate, meanwhile, is expected to

begin final consideration of its legislation creating a national intelligence director and a national counterterrorism center next week. The Senate Governmental Affairs Committee Wednesday voted 17-0 to send a bill to the full Senate for consideration, and Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, R-Tenn., has blocked off the week to work on it, said Sen. Susan Collins, the committee chairman.

Several senators are calling for a slower pace, saying the changes are too far reaching to rush. "I'm willing to break with the president and say, 'Let's not do this before the election,'" Sen. Robert Bennett, R-Utah, said Wednesday.

Collins, R-Maine, said she vehemently disagrees with those who want to wait. "If we wait till next year, I would bet that you that nothing will happen," she said.

Senate leaders plan to add other 9/11 commission recommendations when the bill reaches the floor. But the House's draft deals with many facets of the intelligence and national security structure up front.

Survivors emerge two days after crash

The Associated Press

KALISPELL, Mont. — Two days after they were reported killed in a plane crash, two Forest Service employees emerged from the wilderness, astonishing their relatives as huffing rescuers still picking through the charred wreckage.

Jodie Hogg, 23, of Billings, and Matthew Ramige, 29, of Jackson Hole, Wyo., were spotted along a highway Wednesday, nearly 48 hours after the wreck that killed three others, officials said.

"You can't believe the elation," said Jim Hogg, Jodie's father.

Hogg was hospitalized in stable condition Thursday, while Ramige was in intensive care in serious condition.

Flathead County Sheriff Jim Dupont learned there were survivors Wednesday while at the crash site on a mountain south of Glacier National Park, where he had been sifting through the burned wreckage and human remains.

"It's just an unbelievable miracle. You look at that crash site, that wreckage, you'd never believe anyone could have survived," he said.

The single-engine aircraft under contract to the Forest Service left Kalispell on Monday on a 30-minute flight to the Great



The wreckage of a single-engine plane that crashed Monday is seen strewn in the Great Bear Wilderness near Essex, Mont. Three people died in the crash; two survived.

Bear-Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex.

The four passengers planned to conduct an annual vegetation inventory and repair telecommunication facilities. The plane was last heard from 15 minutes later, during stormy weather.

Dupont said the aircraft went from more than 100 mph to zero in less than 40 feet.

"Who can survive that?" Dupont asked. A fire "literally melted everything."

The dead were identified as pilot Jim Long, 60, of Kalispell; Davita Bryant, 32, a Forest Service worker from Whitefish; and Ken Good, 58, a Flathead forest employee also from Whitefish.

Good managed to get out of the wreckage, but died nearby. His body was recovered late Tuesday. There were three unbuckled seat belts, the sheriff said. "Now, I know why."

Ramige's mother, Dr. Wendy Becker, visited her son at the hospital, where he was taken for burns.

"I still can't believe it. I can see that he's alive now," she told KOMO-TV for a report posted Thursday on its Web site.

"Can you imagine these families?" asked Bob Bryant, father-in-law of victim Davita Bryant. "They've been told their kids are dead. And now they are resuscitated."

Hutchinson, undersecretary for homeland security.

"Right now, under the rules we get the information (about passenger boardings) at Homeland Security, I believe it's 15 minutes after the plane takes off," Hutchinson said.

"There's a gap there, so obviously the rules have to be changed," Hutchinson acknowledged in an interview on ABC's "Good Morning America."

Report: Variations in medical care kill thousands in U.S.

By MARK SHERMAN

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Requiring doctors and hospitals to report publicly on their performance and tying their pay to the results would dramatically reduce avoidable deaths and costs attributable to poor medical care, says a new report from an organization that works to improve health care quality.

With variations in medical care led to 79,000 avoidable deaths and \$1.8 billion in additional medical costs last year, the private National Committee for Quality Assurance said in its annual report released Wednesday.

The report described a substantial gap in quality between the best providers and the national average for treating a range of common conditions that would not be tolerated in almost any other sector of the U.S. economy. For example, failure to control high blood pressure resulted in up to 26,000 deaths last year that could have been avoided with competent medical care, the report said.

The differences in health care quality persist even as health insurance premiums have risen by more than 10 percent annually for the past four years. "This report underscores that all too often we are not getting good value for

that money," said Peter V. Lee, president and chief executive of the Pacific Business Group on Health, a coalition of businesses that provide health insurance to 3 million people.

On the other hand, the report found that health insurance plans that publicly report their performance showed marked improvement in most areas, including cholesterol management, diabetes care, breast cancer screening and flu shots for adults.

Better control of blood pressure will lead to 2,500 fewer fatal heart attacks in 2004, the report said. Health plans also did a better job of reducing cholesterol levels among patients with diabetes, it said.

But those plans cover only about a quarter of the U.S. population, about 69 million people.

"The data we have tell a great story, health care quality is improving consistently and dramatically," said Margaret E. O'Kane, NQCA's president. "Why don't we have performance data for the other 75 percent of the U.S. health care system?"

One notable exception to the upward trend in quality was treatment of mental illness, which showed no improvement over 2002.

"Patients get the correct care only about 50 percent of the time," the report said.

No-fly lists in spotlight

WASHINGTON — A gap in the airline passenger-check system permitted Yusuf Islam, formerly known as singer Cat Stevens, to board a London-to-Washington flight despite being on a no-fly list for suspected ties to terrorists, a Bush administration official said Thursday.

The incident dramatizes a need for changes to tighten the system, said Asa

Oops! No marriage license

LOS ANGELES — So, did she or didn't? Britney Spears most definitely got married last week, *People* magazine reports in its Oct. 4 issue filled with pictures of the pop star and her fiancé, Kevin Federline, in wedding apparel and surrounded by family and friends.

What the couple didn't do, according to the Los Angeles County registrar's office,

is file a marriage license after the ceremony.

No big deal, says a member of the singer's camp who declined to be quoted by name.

"They're scheduled to file it next week," she said on Wednesday.

Federline, 26, said the delay was caused when the couple moved their wedding date up to Sept. 18 as word leaked out that they were planning to be married on Oct. 16.

From wire reports

Summer comes in September in Midwest

BY DON BABWIN

The Associated Press

CHICAGO — At a time when restaurants typically put away their patio furniture, sweaters replace T-shirts and sailboats are plucked from the water, Midwesterners are out enjoying activities usually reserved for July and August — not weeks past Labor Day.

Summer is here. Finally.

"We're getting the summer we never had and now we're making up for it," said Bill Snyder, who produces the weather segments of the WGN-TV news in Chicago.

Alyssa Theisen certainly did. The 4-year-old, wearing a dress, darted right into a fountain in Chicago's Millennium Park on Wednesday, surprising her mother.

"She just ran into the water," Angie Theisen said. "I didn't bring her [swim] suit. I thought it was too late."

How weird is it? In Chicago, Wednesday marked the 14th day of the month with temperatures reaching 80 degrees, and Thursday was expected to be the 15th. In August, there were 10.

"You might as well throw your calendar

away," said Shawn Joyce, a Chicago police sergeant keeping an eye on a lakefront beach peppered with sunbathers.

It's looking like this will be only the fifth September in Chicago since records started being kept in the late 1800s that will end with an average high temperature above the average high for August, Snyder said.

It's the same story in other parts of the Midwest.

In Iowa, state climatologist Harry Hinkler said he expects September to end up being warmer than August for only the second time in the state since 1897.

In Minnesota's Twin Cities, September is well on its way to being the sixth warmest on record, following an August that was the sixth coldest, said Pete Ronlay, assistant state climatologist. It was 84 degrees on Wednesday afternoon. On Aug. 10, the high was 59 degrees.

Experts say the reason the Midwest cooled down when it is normally warmer and heated up when it would usually cool off was two unusual weather patterns, one after the other.

During the summer months, there was a dip in the jet stream over eastern Canada and the eastern United States, said Paul Merzlock, a National Weather

Service meteorologist. That was pulling polar air from northwestern and central Canada through the Midwest, causing temperatures to drop.

In Chicago, that translated to just three days with temperatures reaching the 90-degree mark, Snyder said. A typical summer will have 18-21 days that hit at least 90, he said.

This month, an unusually strong high pressure system peaked to the east over the Ohio Valley.

"When one sits in one spot, that tends to slow down other systems," Snyder said. "Normally, cold fronts would move through here a lot faster."

More typical fall weather is poised to return to the Midwest as soon as Friday, according to the National Weather Service.

Until then, Mike Rogers is savoring the sun.

On a normal weekday in late September, Rogers might grab a quick lunch and head back to work. On Wednesday, the only thing he worked on was his tan.

"This has been gorgeous," said the 43-year-old engineer, as he lay on the lawn of a downtown park in shorts, his shoes serving as a pillow. "You don't want this to end."



Brittany Sesny, 8, of Lake Zurich, Ill., plays in Millennium Park's Crown Fountain during unusually warm weather Wednesday in Chicago.

Fla. county denies tales of huge toll from Ivan

The Associated Press

PENSACOLA, Fla. — The rumor mill has been going full tilt since Hurricane Ivan whipped the Florida Panhandle with 130 mph winds last week.

Hear the one about a tornado hitting a hospital and killing 157 people? Or that a 40-foot tidal wave washed 20 people to their deaths? How about the hundreds of bodies hidden away in a morgue?

Escambia County officials have been busy knocking such stories down all week. On Tuesday, Sheriff Ron McNesby denied that he or his staffers are hiding the bodies of people supposedly killed during and after the storm. And he insisted that the portable morgues parked behind Pensacola's Sacred Heart Hospital, site of the county's morgue, isn't housing "dozens and hundreds of bodies."

"How anybody could possibly believe that a sheriff anywhere in the United States could hide 100 dead people is beyond my imagination," he said.

Another storm-related death was reported Wednesday, bringing Escambia County's toll to 11 victims, the state count to at least 19 victims and the national number to at least 57 victims.

Escambia County spokeswoman Sonya Smith gets occasional calls from reporters checking out stories about hidden bodies and other rumors. "Once we know there's no truth to it," she said, "we pitch the phone message."

Ivan reappears in Gulf, may hit again

BY MICHAEL GRACZYK

The Associated Press

HOUSTON — Ivan is making an encore appearance in the Gulf of Mexico, this time as a tropical storm that could come ashore along the coasts of Texas or Louisiana.

Ivan already has kicked seas up several feet, posing a threat to fragile barrier islands and their beaches in both states, and forced some offshore oil and gas crews to head home.

After hitting Florida on Sept. 16 as a hurricane, Ivan weakened and broke apart as it traveled north, drenching southern and mid-Atlantic states before returning to sea. Its remnants then swung southward, growing slightly as it traveled over warmer waters.

The regenerated storm was expected to make landfall in the Gulf of Mexico on Thursday night, and could bring 50 mph winds and 5 to 10 inches of rainfall to sea. Its remnants then swung southward, growing slightly as it traveled over warmer waters.

In Louisiana, Cameron Parish leaders were keeping an eye on the storm, but hadn't issued any evacuation orders yet, said Emergency Preparedness Director Freddie Richard Jr. The swampy parish is located in the southwest corner of the state.

The National Hurricane Center



An SUV is mostly covered by sand Wednesday as residents in Pensacola Beach, Fla., were finally allowed to see their homes and inspect the damage by Hurricane Ivan. Ivan may yet again pose a threat, to Texas and Louisiana, as its remnants have regained strength and are expected to make landfall on Thursday night.

issued a tropical storm warning for the Gulf of Mexico shoreline from the mouth of the Mississippi River in Louisiana west to Sargent, Texas.

Ivan was upgraded to a tropical storm Wednesday evening after sustained winds were measured

near 40 mph. The hurricane center said the storm could strengthen before landfall.

Hurricanes only rarely return to open water, regain strength and threaten land again, said meteorologist Richard Knabb. The first round of Ivan and its remnants

were blamed for at least 52 deaths in the United States and 70 in the Caribbean.

Also Wednesday, North Carolina officials warned coastal residents they may have to evacuate as early as Sunday if Hurricane Jeanne continues on its projected path.



Chucky

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — Chucky, the most wanted fugitive out of Gulf Shores, Ala., proved Wednesday that you can go home again. At least you can when you're a 12-foot-long, 1,000-pound American alligator.

After creating a national stir when he disappeared last week during Hurricane Ivan, the Ala-

bama Gulf Coast Zoo's star attraction was located Tuesday in a sludge drainage ditch at the zoo. A team of gator trackers captured him with a noose and heavy duct tape. State troopers and local police officers then helped haul him to a bear pen, before returning him to the shallow pond where he has spent the last 15 years.

"He was lost and scared, the poor guy," said Tim Williams, a

gator wrestler and media spokesman for Gatorland, an Orlando park that sent a team of experts to search for Chucky. "He's happy to be home."

Chucky is accustomed to hand-fed chicken lunches. Zoo officials were less worried that he would starve than they were worried that he would eat. Chucky has learned to associate people with food.

Gator displaced by storm back at Ala. zoo

IN THE WORLD

Aid in Russia delayed

Confusion over school hostage numbers holds up money

By MARIA DANILOVA

The Associated Press

MOSCOW — Ongoing confusion over exactly how many people were taken hostage during a deadly siege at a southern Russia school is delaying the distribution of more than \$20 million in charity aid, officials said Thursday.

In the three weeks after the school in Beslan was seized by Chechen rebels, leading to the deaths of more than 330 people, nearly \$20.4 million was collected from corporate and private donors in Russia and abroad, according to the Web site of the Regional Development Bank, which is handling the money.

But none of that money has been given to survivors, said Fatima Khabalova, spokeswoman for the North Ossetian parliament. Beslan is in North Ossetia.

The payments have been delayed because of confusion over the exact number of people held inside the school during the deadly Sept. 1-3 siege, said Timur Butayev, a member of the school teachers' committee set up to aid hostage victims.

The Russian Interior Ministry said 1,189 people were taken hostage. But the school teachers' committee said there were more than 1,350 people inside the school when rebels armed with guns and bombs stormed the building.

The tally is difficult to settle because so many relatives accompanied children to school that day, the first day of classes, officials say. Investigators also say they are having difficulty identifying some remains.

The seizure ended in a hail of explosions and gunfire that left more than 330 people dead, nearly half of them children.

Khabalova said payments from the \$20.4 million fund could start next week. She did not detail how the money would be divided among the former hostages and their relatives, but said the Social Development and Labor Ministry would oversee distribution.

So far, Beslan victims have received money only from the regional budget and from donors to their Web site, www.beslan.ru, Butayev said. Donors have contributed \$9,120 to the Web site, Butayev said.

Victims also have started receiving financial aid from the regional government of North Ossetia. Khabalova said. Each family is entitled to \$3,450 for a dead relative and another \$860 to cover funeral costs. Gravely wounded victims are entitled to \$1,725 and the lesser injured \$860.

The federal government will match those amounts to eligible victims beginning next week, Butayev said. The money will be transferred only after regional prosecutors confirm the injuries — further delaying the process.

Beslan victims already have received 257 tons of humanitarian aid from around the world, including 58 tons of medicine, 94 tons of medical equipment, 16 tons of clothing, 81 tons of groceries and 6 tons of toys, the Gazeta.ru Web site reported, citing regional Emergency Ministry officials.

Lufthansa problems

FRANKFURT, Germany — A problem with German airline Lufthansa's computerized check-in system led to cancellations and delays for its European flights for several hours Thursday, the airline said in a statement.

Before the problem was fixed shortly after noon, 33 flights had to be canceled, the statement said. Many others were delayed by up to 90 minutes.

Flights from Lufthansa partners British Midland, Austrian Airlines and Poland's LOT were also affected.

Lufthansa spokesman Stefan Schaffrath said the problem was caused by a failure with the airline's software. It had no impact on security, the airline said.

Bosnia mass grave

SARAJEVO, Bosnia-Herzegovina — Forensic experts have exhumed 249 bodies from a mass grave in northeastern Bosnia containing victims of the country's devastating 1992-95 war, an official said Thursday.

Murat Hurtic, an official with the missing persons commission in the Muslim-Croat part of the country, said exhumations have been completed at the site in the village of Bljevac, about 55 miles northeast of Sarajevo.

Based on the documents and other evidence found on the bodies, most of the dead appeared to be Bosnian Muslims killed in the 1995 massacre in nearby Srebrenica, the worst massacre of civilians in Europe since World War II, he said.

The remains will undergo DNA analysis in an attempt to identify them. The site is a so-called secondary grave, where bodies initially buried elsewhere were dumped in an effort to hide them, Hurtic said.

Marijuana seizure

VIENNA, Austria — It would be hard to forget to wear these plants.

Police said Thursday they seized more than 2,300 marijuana plants that were being grown inside a house in Vienna. The home's owner, whose name was

not released, was arrested along with two other people.

Police leader Wolfgang Roudny said the bust happened Wednesday night.

Compulsory service

BERLIN — Germany's lower house of parliament voted overwhelmingly Thursday against a referendum to end the country's compulsory military service.

After a debate lasting more than two hours, only 44 of parliament's 573 members voted for the proposal submitted by the small pro-business Free Democratic Party.

Germany requires nine months of military service from its citizens, though many opt for alternate civilian service in social work, hospitals and similar public-service jobs.

The Free Democrats parliamentary leader Wolfgang Gerhardt argued that ending the military service would free the money used to train new recruits for other needed projects or programs.

From The Associated Press

Deadly crash



A school bus is pulled out of a reservoir in Ercehim, some 620 miles southwest of Rio de Janeiro on Wednesday. The school bus swerved off a narrow road and plunged into the reservoir early Wednesday morning, killing at least 16 children.

Rebel group favors U.N. sanctions against Sudan

By ELLEN KNICKMEYER

The Associated Press

NDJAMENA, Chad — One of western Sudan's main rebel movements endorsed proposed U.N. sanctions against Sudan, saying Thursday that only such pressure would force the government to stop the killing in Darfur.

Two political leaders of the Sudan Liberation Army spoke to The Associated Press in the capital of Chad, the western neighbor of Sudan, days after the U.N. Security Council resolved to consider oil sanctions on Sudan over the government's alleged backing for ethnic cleansing in Darfur.

"Sanctions will help pressure this government, will help this government come to its senses," said Sharif Harir, who was chief negotiator for the Sudan Liberation Army at the failed peace talks in Nigeria.

"The government is using this oil revenue to buy weapons, guns, (Russian) Antonov planes) to kill our people. So I have to support (the sanctions)," said Adam Shogar, another of the rebel group's leaders.

In an 11-0 vote on Saturday with four abstentions — China, Russia, Pakistan and Algeria — the Security Council said it would

meet again to consider sanctions against Sudan's petroleum sector, or other measures, if Sudan did not act quickly to stop the violence in Darfur and bring the perpetrators to justice.

The resolution also authorized U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan to appoint a commission to investigate reports of human rights violations in Darfur and determine "whether or not acts of genocide have occurred," as the United States and others have charged.

Sudanese President Omar el-Bashir shrugged off the U.N. resolution, saying his government was not afraid of it. The Foreign Ministry said that while the resolution was flawed, the government would try "to bring the situation to normal in Darfur."

Critics of sanctions as a diplomatic weapon say they create hardship for a country's people while doing little to force change.

Harir said that in Sudan, only the ruling elite controls oil and the oil wealth, and only they would be suffer from U.N. sanctions.

As for sanctions hurting the people, "One-point-four million people are without homes. What more hardship is there than that?" Harir asked rhetorically.

Tough security raises concerns of civil liberties violations in Netherlands

By TOBY STERLING

The Associated Press

AMSTERDAM, Netherlands — After the Sept. 11 attacks in the United States, Dutch intelligence claimed to have uncovered a series of Islamic terrorist plots, prompting many people here wonder "Are we next?"

The terror fears have spawned a raft of harsh security measures — from forcing citizens over 13 to carry identity cards, to author-

izing police to stop and search people with no apparent cause — that challenge the image of the Netherlands as one of the world's most progressive nations.

Some people are already talking about a serious erosion of civil liberties.

The government is playing a game of penny football, where they move from one expansion of the law to another in reaction to the latest development," said Jes-

sica Silversmith, a spokeswoman for the National Anti-Discrimination Bureau, a nongovernmental organization.

But there is no equivalent to the U.S. Patriot Act in Europe, most countries have taken anti-terrorism steps that curtail civil liberties: Britain has held foreign suspects without charge, while Germany began religious profiling of suspects in the days after Sept. 11.

In France, with its history of at-

tacks from Algerian dissidents, special judges have writetapping powers similar to those granted to prosecutors under new Dutch laws.

But the new power of the law enforcement agencies seem an odd fit here in the Netherlands — a country with a let-it-live attitude. It was the first to tolerate marijuana use and to legalize euthanasia and gay marriage.

Among other measures implemented in reaction to the threat

of terror in the Netherlands are relaxing rules on wiretapping and monitoring Internet traffic, and tripling the amount of time suspects can be held without charge from three days to ten.

Since the Sept. 11 attacks, 40 Muslims have been arrested on suspicion of terrorism-related activity. Only two have been convicted of any crime. The latest arrests came in July, but the detections were only disclosed this month.

Brits add new people into Oxford dictionary

BY SUE LEEMAN
The Associated Press

LONDON — Former U.S. President George Washington and Diana, Princess of Wales are near the back, while the front features lesser-knowns such as murdered Liverpool toddler Jamie Bulger and the Busby Babes, a tragic soccer team.

It's not another wax museum, but the latest edition of the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, the printed pantheon of Britons great and small, published Thursday.

The inclusion of Linda McCartney, the late photographer wife of ex-Beatle Paul and a campaigner for animal rights, raised some eyebrows. But publishers said it was a sign that the 60-volume work is simply becoming more egalitarian.

Linda McCartney, said editor Brian Harrison, "was also a very important cultural figure in her own right."

"I'm not saying that she should get as much attention as Queen Victoria, but the great pride of the dictionary is that it should have small people as well as large people in it," he said.

In their bid to include more of those who have affected British public life, the editors have included some darker examples among the 54,922 entries — those whose deaths, as much as their lives, have affected Britain:

- Jamie Bulger, a 2-year-old toddler who was abducted and murdered by two 10-year-old boys in his home town of Liverpool, a case that caused a national outcry.

- Stephen Lawrence, 15-year-old son of Jamaican immigrants, murdered by white youths in 1993; his case led to a change in procedures by the London police force, which bungled the investigation.

- Jill Dando, a TV personality shot to death on her own doorman in 1999.

- Members of the Manchester United soccer team — known affectionately as the Busby Babes — who were killed in a plane crash in Germany in 1958.

"These are not just people who were killed but people who had an impact," said projects director Robert Faber.

Only people who died before Dec. 31, 2000, are included.



People make their way through knee-deep, muddy water running through Gonaïves, Haiti. The government said up to 1,250 people were still missing and that the death toll could rise to 2,000 people.

Haiti's death toll from Jeanne rose to 1,070

Estimated quarter million left homeless

BY AMY BRACKEN
The Associated Press

GONAÏVES, Haiti — Trucks dumped scores of bodies into a mass grave in this flood-ravaged city still littered with corpses, as officials said the death toll from Tropical Storm Jeanne rose to more than 1,070 and could double again.

An estimated quarter million Haitians were left homeless.

Survivors who spent the night crammed into schools, churches and on rooftops sloped through contaminated ankle-deep mud Thursday, holding limbs to their noses against the stench of putrefying bodies and overflowing latrines. People defecated on sidewalks.

"There are so many bodies, you smell them but you don't see them," said farmer Louise Roland. She said her rice and corn field was under water so she walked miles to town to try to get food.

Limited distribution by aid workers Thursday left most in this city of 250,000 still hungry, thirsty and increasingly agitated.

Officials said workers were digging more mass graves to bury bodies stacked outside morgues without electricity, for burial Thursday. Other workers were digging through mud to recover even more bodies.

There was no funeral ceremony when the bodies were dumped into a 14-foot-deep hole at sunset Wednesday. Dozens of bystanders shrieked and demanded officials collect bodies in nearby waterlogged fields.

Only a couple dozen bodies have been identified, and nobody was taking count at the site of the mass grave.

"We're demanding they come and take the bodies from our fields. Dogs are eating them," said bystander Jean Lebrun, listing demands made by residents in the neighborhood whose oppo-

sition to mass graves had delayed burials.

"We can only drink the water people died in," the 35-year-old farmer said, citing a lack of potable water six days after the storm's passage.

Hurricane experts said Thursday that Jeanne — now a 100-mph hurricane — appeared set to do a loop over the Atlantic and zero in on the northwest and central islands of the Bahamas and then the southeast U.S. coast with forecasts putting Florida firmly in its sights. Landfall was possible Saturday.

The Bahamian government posted a tropical storm watch for the central islands, including Cat Islands, the Exumas, Long Island, Rum Cay and San Salvador.

Jeanne's rain-laden system proved deadly in Haiti, where more than 98 percent of the land is deforested and torrents of water and mudslides smashed down denuded hills and into the city, destroying homes and crops.

Russia eyes Kyoto

MOSCOW — The Russian government has asked five ministries to approve ratification of the controversial Kyoto protocol, which seeks to reduce emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases believed to contribute to global warming, officials said Thursday.

The European Union has long urged Russia to ratify the 1997 protocol. But opponents have argued that it will stifle the nation's economic growth, derailing President Vladimir Putin's plan of doubling Russia's gross domestic product in 10 years.

The Natural Resources Ministry already has put its stamp of approval on the ratification documents.

The World Wildlife Fund said that Putin had instructed key ministers to sign off on the documents last week. The documents could be ratified by the parliament within the "next few weeks," the WWF said in a statement.

Taiwanese ship seized

MOSCOW — A Russian helicopter fired missiles at a Taiwanese fishing trawler, and the coast guard seized the vessel and its crew after the boat was allegedly caught in Russian territorial waters with hundreds of tons of illegally culled fish, Russian state television reported.

A Russian helicopter fired several missiles at the Cheng Hui No. 1 trawler not far from the Kuril Islands on Sept. 17, after the vessel failed to stop, Rossiya television reported late Wednesday.

Russian guards from the frigate Sokol then boarded the trawler and found some 200 tons of fish and other sea products. The trawler was then escorted to an unnamed harbor, Rossiya reported.

Balkan's green issues

SKOPJE, Macedonia — International experts and officials from southeastern Europe gathered in the Macedonian capital Thursday to discuss ways of joining the region's environmental problems.

Addressing delegates from Albania, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo, Serbia, Montenegro and Romania, Macedonia's environment minister, Ljubomir Janev, said environmental problems have "little regard for national borders" and urged countries to cooperate on solutions.

"The environment does not recognize administrative borders, and it's our obligation to future generations to preserve and protect natural resources," Janev said.

Poisoning investigation

KIEV, Ukraine — Ukrainian prosecutors opened a criminal investigation into the alleged poisoning of a leading candidate in a crucial presidential election scheduled for next month, officials said.

The candidate, Viktor Yushchenko, became sick more than two weeks ago, and his campaign charged that he was poisoned by political opponents. The allegations have raised the already heated race to replace outgoing President Leonid Kuchma.

From The Associated Press

Putin: U.S. not stemming Afghan drug trade

The Associated Press

MOSCOW — President Vladimir Putin said Thursday that U.S.-led forces in Afghanistan were doing "almost nothing" to stem the flow of drugs from that country.

Since the fall of the Taliban regime in 2001, Afghanistan's opium production has risen dramatically and much of it makes

its way to Western Europe via Central Asia and Russia. The cultivation of opium poppies was largely eliminated under the Taliban's religious policing, but farmers have resumed cultivating and harvesting the profitable crop.

"They are doing almost nothing there even to lessen the drug threat," Putin said at a meeting with the head of Russia's drug agency, Viktor Cherkesov, refer-

ring to the U.S.-led international force in Afghanistan. "Our efforts through diplomatic and political channels are not achieving results yet."

He said it was necessary to step up cooperation with all the countries involved in the anti-terrorism effort in Afghanistan, and Putin said he would urge the U.S. to drive home to Western countries that they, too, were threatened by the Afghan drug trade.

Putin said that Russian drug authorities should do a better job of informing the West of the drug threat they themselves face.

Cherkesov told Putin that experts estimate 70 percent to 80 percent of the opiates in Britain originate in Afghanistan. U.N. surveys estimate Afghanistan accounted for three-quarters of the world's opium last year, and the trade brought in \$2.3 billion.

Woman's flips damage controversial exhibit

Art attacked belongs to collector whose grandfather was Nazi-era arms supplier

By DAVID RISING
The Associated Press

BERLIN — A woman doing handstands hurled herself into two art installations at the controversial exhibition of a collection belonging to the billionaire heir of a Nazi-era arms supplier, damaging both pieces, organizers said Thursday.

The bizarre attack came late Wednesday on the top floor of the Hamburger Bahnhof museum, where Friedrich Christian Flick's collection was opened to the public earlier in the day.

Yelling loudly, the 35-year-old woman attacked "Office Baroque," a cutout section of wall by American artist Gordon Matta-Clark, doing a series of head-over-heels flips before landing on the work in a handstand, punching both her arms through the drywall, said Klaus Dieter Lehmann, president of Berlin's Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation.

She then ran across the large room, pushing over a section of a spray-painted truck called "Graf-

fiti Truck," also by Matta-Clark, bending back the metal roof.

Taken aback, a security guard called his supervisor for advice on how to react before moving to protect other pieces in the room, Lehmann said.

Police arrived on the scene about five minutes later and took the woman into custody.

As she was apprehended, the woman said, "Flick, I am satisfied," according to a museum security official.

Lehmann said the woman was known to police for causing disturbances.

"It was not a political action according to police," he said. "From the profile of the woman, we think it was an isolated incident."

Officials said the two works could be restored and had no damage estimate.

"It's particularly tragic because Gordon Matta-Clark died very young," said museum curator Eugen Blume. "These pieces are particularly noteworthy. It was a violent attack against art and we regret it very much."



Art collector Friedrich Christian Flick, left, and German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder stand next to the art entitled "Haavy Maedels" by German artist Martin Kippenberger during a visit Tuesday to the Flick art exhibition in Berlin. The exhibition is controversial, because Flick is an heir of Nazi-era arms supplier Friedrich Flick.

Matta-Clark, whose activities included "building cuts" or chopping out sections of abandoned buildings, died in 1978 at the age of 35, the year after he created "Office Baroque."

Controversy has surrounded the Flick exhibition, with many questioning whether it was appropriate to display works from the collection of 2,500 contemporary pieces given the family's back-

ground.

Flick's grandfather, Friedrich Flick, lost his fortune after Nazi Germany's defeat in World War II when he was sentenced to seven years in prison for crimes that included the use of slave labor in his arms factories and the confiscation of Jewish property. Released in 1950, he was able to rebuild his business in West Germany before his death in 1972.

Critics have accused the younger Flick of trying to whitewash his family history with the exhibit, while the Berlin government has said that the art speaks for itself, separate from the Flick name.

Still, only a handful of demonstrators protested outside the official opening ceremony Tuesday as Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder gave the keynote address, and a poll released this week showed 58 percent of Germans said they supported showing the Flick collection, with 27 percent opposed.

The exhibit attracted 5,000 people Wednesday, the first day it was open to the public, with no protests outside.

Diners at Paris restaurant try eating 'blind'

By JOCELYN GECKER
The Associated Press

PARIS — They tasted like tomatoes, but in the pitch black it was hard to tell. A couple at the next table was obviously struggling with eating blind, too. "I don't know what it is," came a man's voice in the darkness.

"Oh! That's not good," his lady friend responded. This is dining in the dark, the concept of a new restaurant in the City of Light that wants diners to know what it's like to be blind.

At Dans le Noir — In the Dark — it's not just that the lights are off and curtains closed. Diners sit in a room of inky blackness that the eyes never adjust to. And that's the idea.

"It awakens your other senses," said the restaurant's owner Edouard de Broglie, who is not blind. "It alters your perspective, your relations with others. It shows what happens when you can't see."

Fingertips seek out familiarity, patting the table for a fork, a plate, a hand to hold. The nose perks up to every passing plume of steam.

Covered by darkness, food is reduced to textures and shapes. One realizes the role sight plays in the joy of eating.

Although privately run, the restaurant comes under a growing effort to make Paris — which is bidding for the 2012 Olympic Games — more handicapped-friendly.

City Hall has boosted its budget for handicapped concerns to \$28 million in 2004 from just \$2.5 million in 2000.

A massive overhaul to make sports stadiums, cultural sites and public transport more accessible to the handicapped is planned over the next decade. A fleet of handicapped-accessible taxis also is starting at the end of this month.

The 55-seat restaurant, which opened in July on a street beside the Pompidou Center museum, draws a diverse crowd that comes for a variety of reasons.

An American tourist who is progressively grow-



People enter the Dans le Noir (In the Black) restaurant Tuesday in Paris. Diners eat in the dark at the new restaurant so they can experience what it's like to be blind. Blind waiters serve as guides.

ing blind went for the experience of total darkness, and to show his wife what life eventually will look like for him.

"This is a great place," said Mike Sahyun, a 34-year-old software developer from Minneapolis, Minn. "She gets to see what it's like for me."

Blind waiters serve as guides, leading diners hand-on-shoulder from the lighted entrance bar through a series of black curtains to tables. Cell phones, watches and other objects that produce light are checked at lockers in the lobby.

Pretensions, etiquette and vanity dissolve in the darkness. Once seated, strangers strike up conversation, seeking the reassurance that comes with hearing and touching what can't be seen.

The restaurant's seven-person wait staff is registered blind, but its chef can see. Eating is challenging. Scooping a fork across the plate often comes up empty. Celine advises fighting the temptation to eat with your hands — something a blind person tries to avoid in public.

Diners can choose from a selection of Provence-style food or opt for a "mystery menu" that, for many, becomes a guessing game.

"I don't know what it is," Adele Le Barchanel, a 22-year-old Parisian, told her boyfriend, unaware of a nearby cave-dweller.

"Me neither," he replied. "There's a lot of it. I think."

Prices range from from \$35-45, without wine.

Abundant grapes could mean good '04 vintage

By KATE BRUMBACK
The Associated Press

PARIS — Grape vines in the Champagne region are sagging this year with an abundance of fruit. But this won't mean increased supply — or cheaper bottles of bubbly for consumers.

It may, however, mean a very good vintage.

In Champagne — where the wine was served to kings for centuries to celebrate coronations — large harvests tend to produce great wines, said Daniel Lorse, spokesman for the Committee of Champagne Wines.

This harvest has the potential to be the Champagne region's largest since it first started recording yields about 100 years ago, said Lorse in a telephone interview.

"We are hoping this will be a very good vintage," he said.

"All the signs are in place, but it is still too early to tell. We are still at the stage of hopes and expectations. That said, we are very optimistic."

From Bordeaux to Burgundy and beyond, France's wine regions are welcoming a return to normal after last year's harsh frosts and devastating heat wave. The result of that bad weather was often smaller, more sugary grapes which presented problems for some vintners.

Instead of the early and un-

ally small harvest of 2003, a copious yield is in store this year, vintners and wine officials say.

They say this harvest should produce some 1.55 billion gallons of wine for all of France — compared to about 1.45 billion gallons in a normal year. Last year, the yield dropped to 1.25 billion gallons.

The harvest started Monday in Champagne country, some 90 miles northeast of Paris. Even though vines are heavy with fruit, not all will be harvested. The amount of grapes gathered is strictly regulated by the INAO, an organization that sets yearly limits for each wine region. The measure is designed to ensure quality.

Vintners, citing the soft autumnal weather, are hopeful that 2004 will produce good wine. "One of the rules of the art is that the quality of the vintage depends on the quality of the climate during the grape gathering," said Denis Verdier, president of Onivins, the French national wine office. "The indicators are very good. If an overcast stays nice, we'll go toward a very good year quality-wise."

In Bordeaux, harvesting began Monday for the earliest white wine grapes and begins late this week for more famous reds like Saint-Emilion or Pomerol, according to Florence Raffard of the Council of Bordeaux Vintners.

AP writer Ingrid Rousseau in Paris contributed to this report.

"All the signs are in place, but it is still too early to tell."

Daniel Lorse
spokesman, Committee of Champagne Wines

STARS AND STRIPES LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Prudence is not fear

In the letter "Show bravery, not fear" (Sept. 17), the writer states that during a visit to Camp Anacosta on Sept. 11, 2004, normal camp operations were interrupted for nearly three hours by a mortar attack. The writer says the soldiers on Camp Anacosta were "living in fear, which is a bad way to live your life." According to the writer, although [U.S. forces] "have planes, helicopters and an array of devices to detect mortar attacks" our response to the attack was to exhibit "fear and hiding." First, it is true that to live in fear would be a bad way to live one's life. However to ignore an incoming mortar barrage and continue normal operations would be just plain foolish. There is a big difference between a soldier exhibiting "fear and hiding" and a soldier using common sense. Commanders issue guidance stating which force protection measures soldiers should take and when they are to take those measures, in order to protect their troops. I'm sure that during basic training the writer was taught to seek cover while under attack. Occupying a bunker or similar protective shelter during a mortar attack is not a difference.

Second, yes, the Army does have ways of detecting the source of incoming mortar fire and various means of responding to that fire. What the author fails to take into account is that the anti-mortar forces who have chosen to continue these cowardly attacks are not bound by the same rules of engagement that our forces are. Surely there was a thought process that took place during and after the attack, and although I and I may not be aware of it, a choice was made regarding how best to respond to the mortar fire. The author fails to mention fire by leveling the source of the fire within minutes, but what purpose would that serve if the launch point was the courtyard of a school or a local mosque and, more important, what kind of message would it send?

I liken some of the writer's comments to calling U.S. forces cowards. Rest assured there is a big difference between cowardice and a prudent soldier. Our brothers-in-arms exhibit bravery each time they exit that tent to conduct operations in that hostile land. Show them some respect.

Chief Warrant Officer 4 Kelvin Holt
 Hanau, Germany

Stripes backs free speech

As an American citizen who reads Stars and Stripes each day, I'd like to clarify what the writer of "Stripes too liberal," (Sept. 21) may not understand. First, if the writer doesn't like what he believes to be too much "liberal" news in this newspaper, perhaps he should write his elected representatives. After all, it is Congress that mandates Stars and Stripes' position as a "First Amendment" freedom-of-speech newspaper. It is because of this freedom of speech that the writer and others can still voice their opinions rather than being stifled.

DOD Directive 5122.11 directs Stars

Tell us what you think

Stars and Stripes welcomes your comments on editorials and columns that are published in the newspaper, and values letters on topics of importance in the lives of our readers. All letters must be signed, and must include the writer's address or base and telephone number. Please limit all letters to 300 words. We reserve the right to edit letters for length, taste and clarity.

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 Unit 29480
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 Stars and Stripes
 Postfach 1330
 64345 Greinheim

Via fax: (Country code +49) (0) 6155-601395;
 DSN 349-8395

E-mail: letters@mail.strips.com

and Stripes to be accurate, factual, impartial and objective. Also, the National Defense Authorization Act 1990 says that the paper "must enjoy the full protection of the First Amendment, and military personnel on the frontiers of freedom must enjoy their First Amendment right."

I respect and admire the writer and the others serving in Iraq. I also admire him for voicing his First Amendment right in this freedom-of-speech-protected newspaper. But before he becomes the spokesperson for all serving in Iraq, perhaps he should consider how some who serve with him may actually desire reading information that may not fit into his less-than-objective perspective.

Not only liberal.

Michael Tolmann
 Heidelberg, Germany

No evidence of bias

Stars and Stripes should not have published the Sept. 21 letter "Stripes too liberal," a baseless rant. The writer offers no facts or supporting evidence. He only repeats the mantra of political conservatives who have bullied media outlets into more-favorable coverage for their pet causes. Stripes has been a journalistic institution for too long to be intimidated by either side of the political aisle.

Maybe Stripes is too liberal, maybe it is too conservative. But arguments either way should be supported by facts, not hot air. In this case, Stripes has devoted precious space to one writer's superficial claim — space that could have been filled by a more substantive and thoughtful letter.

Kevin Corcoran
 Logistical Support Area Anacosta, Iraq

Put spotlight on all

In his opinion column in the Aug. 16 Stars and Stripes ("...but recruitment tactics downplay real dangers"), G. Jefferson Price III suggests strongly that the Army is offering young people an opportunity to learn new jobs in interesting career fields, then sending them off to war instead.

I argue, rather, that the Army is sending soldiers to war where they continue to learn their jobs. It's not the "ball-and-swing" tactic that he calls it, just an unfortunate new location for soldiers to continue their duty.

Were there a big difference between being a cook (or a medic) and being a warrior, then the 120,000 troops we have there might now would all be combat arm soldiers. And since the going size of a Brigade Combat Team seems to be about 3,600 soldiers, some quick mathematics suggest that there would be about 33 such brigades on the ground in Iraq at any given time.

In case we forgot the argument for the new Brigade Units of Action, there were 33 brigades in the active Army in the Operation Iraqi Freedom began. In fact, there are only a handful of these brigades on the ground in Iraq, totaling less than a quarter of the total force.

What Price doesn't seem to want to make clear is that those folks who got the medical, clerical and otherwise cool jobs the Army promised them are still doing those jobs in Iraq, Afghanistan and everywhere else the Army goes. Even within those brigades, as memory serves, about 20 percent of the personnel are other than combat-arm soldiers. Cooks, medics, mechanics, clerks and so on are among the personnel within even the smallest units.

Merely because we don't read about these personnel in the major daily newspapers doesn't mean they're not doing their jobs, sometimes for wages that are as much as a break for a nap. No, I believe the soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan are doing the jobs the Army enlisted them for. They're doing them all day, every day, mostly for the Army goes. Even without understanding of their lifestyles or daily routines by the press at home.

Perhaps in the next war we should embed reporters with finance, transportation and medical units, if just so that folks at home understand that their sons and daughters are doing what recruiters signed them up to do.

Staff Sgt. James A. Stevens III
 Camp Page, South Korea

Wager part of communion

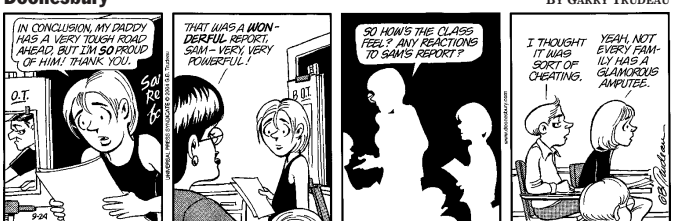
The writer of the letter "Church not wrong" (Sept. 6) may have forgotten God's words at the Last Supper. A little refresher course — God said to eat and drink, do this in remembrance of me. The writer — unlearned cracker or broken bread — represents the breaking of God's body and the wine represents the blood shed on the cross for our sins. We are to partake of both.

As far as busy schedules, there is no excuse — we should always have time for God or we should make time. Does God make excuses to us? No, he always has time for us. I think teaching our children when still young and old enough to understand is the best thing. If you say Communion is a waste of time, then God is a waste of time.

Sp. Lloyd Marino
 Camp Victory, Iraq

BY GARRY TRUDEAU

Doonesbury



STARS AND STRIPES Web site: WWW.STRIPS.COM

OPINION/OMBUDSMAN

Bush addressed wrong audience at U.N.

The (Baltimore) Sun

It was to be expected that President Bush's address Tuesday to the U.N. General Assembly would be aimed less at the diplomatic audience than at the domestic political audience that will vote within weeks on his re-election bid.

And from that standpoint, he probably achieved what he set out to do: reaffirming the correctness of his course in ousting Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq without U.N. approval, and casting that action as part of a broader cause — notably the widely supported war in Afghanistan — to make the world safer by fighting tyranny and bringing freedom to oppressed peoples.

"Eventually," he said, "there is no safe isolation from terror networks or failed states that shelter them or outlaw regimes or weapons of mass destruction. Eventual-

ly, there is no safety in looking away."

Yet in once again stoking domestic security fears, even in the face of ample evidence that the Iraqi regime posed no immediate threat to the United States, the president may have missed the chance to truly engage world leaders in that broader cause.

His new proposal — creation of a fund within the United Nations to assist fledgling democracies such as Iraq in conducting elections, and establishing independent courts, a free press, political parties and trade unions — was offered as a throw-away line at the end of his speech.

Bush observed that all member nations "have a stake in the success of the world's newest democracies" but gave no signal that he was serious about trying to persuade his world partners to work with him to secure a peaceful transition in Iraq, which can prob-

ably be won only with their help. He and Secretary of State Colin Powell were reported to be lobbying behind the scenes for help in providing security for Iraqi elections. But aides indicated they had little hope of securing more than training assistance for Iraqi police, and debt relief, which had been promised in a U.N. resolution adopted last spring.

Indeed, Bush supporters scoffed at Democratic challenger John Kerry's assertions Monday that world leaders outside of the original coalition that backed the Iraq invasion are open to appeals for assistance now.

As insurgents returned this week to their grisly tactic of beheading noncombatant contractors, security in Iraq has deteriorated to the point that no nation can be enthusiastic about sending its citizens there. Replacing Bush with Kerry likely would not change that. And yet... the United



States can't give up on making Iraq safety and security an international project. It's not about re-treating, as Bush hinted Kerry would do, but about prevailing... Bush apparently believes he can't risk projecting an image of

weakness right before an election he's trying to win on a record of making this country safer. How inconvenient for reality to intrude. Yet it has, and there's no time to waste in dealing with it.

Page 1 headlines during Iraq war true to mission

This is the fourth in a series of columns on the coverage by Stars and Stripes of the conditions in Iraq since April 2004, which was the first anniversary of the fall of Baghdad.

The first three columns appeared in the June 28, July 27 and Aug. 30 editions.

Ombudsman

This column deals with the headline and graphic displays on Page 1. Two hundred front pages from April through the end of the presidential conventions early this month were tracked and scored. The European, Pacific and Mideast editions were reviewed.

Where the Mideast and the European editions had the same headlines on Page 1, only one paper was counted. The Pacific edition always had at least one different headline from the European and/or Mideast edition and was tracked separately.

The goal was to determine the number, emphasis and variety of stories chosen for Page 1 display and the tone and quality of the headlines.

As a tabloid, which is physically half the size of the standard newspaper page, Stars and Stripes has faced complaints that it was "a sensational tabloid" because it used large headlines on crime stories on Page 1. This is the stereotype that comes from the approach of some metropolitan area tabloids. But a tabloid is, first and foremost, a convenient, easy-to-handle and easy-to-read format. It is also an ideal format for the military audience. Some tabloids use a mix of text and pictures with text starting on Page 1. Others are just pictures and headlines on Page 1. Stars is designed and uses a format that tries to present variety on what's inside the newspaper through headlines and pictures. And what was the tone and emphasis on the main Page 1 headline?

Page 1 of Stars is a billboard for the news of the day. This review looked at Stars' front pages in five ways. How many news items were featured on Page 1? What was the topic of the main headline? Was the topic chosen for news value or "sensationalism"? What was the total number and variety of news items featured on Page 1? And what was the tone

and emphasis of the Page 1 headlines?

Stories featured on Page 1: Seventy-one percent of the time there were six displays on Page 1; 16 percent of the time, 5, 12.5 percent of the time, 7, and only once, 4. The look of Page 1 was consistent and attractive.

Main headline: Military news, which would be the equivalent of "local news" for the typical hometown newspaper, dominated. Forty percent of the stories were stories of specific interest to military personnel. Two-third were a combination of positive and negative stories about how the Iraq aftermath was affecting military personnel. One-third was significant coverage of non-war issues.

The most recent column in this series ("Stripes reported their own Iraq story titles to tell") praised the efforts of the Stars reporting staff to provide a dimension of the Iraq situation beyond the breaking news. The headline survey showed that the reporting effort was properly taken to the next level with significant attention on Page 1.

Breaking war action was the main story 27.5 percent of the time; national news was featured 12 percent of the time; foreign news 10 percent; and miscellaneous other, 10.5 percent.

Crime news, the typical fare of many tabloids, was included in the "all other" category, which totaled 20 stories. Only four of the 20 were crime stories. And all four were in the Pacific edition and a typical one (main headline and subhead) was "20 sailors implicated in Guam drug probe." "Some will face

jailed, all to be kicked out of Navy."

News value of main topics: A review of all the main headlines showed much more emphasis on news value than "sensationalism." The headlines consistently were declarative and not provocative. Some examples:

- "Kosovo 5 years later" "The U.S. military presence is now smaller, but the mission hasn't changed since 1999"
- "String of attacks kills about 100 in Iraq"

- "Hundreds of students held captive in Russia"
- "Saddam defiant in court"

- "Bush OKs 3.5 percent salary hike for troops" "How much does that mean for you? See the 2005 pay chart"
- "U.S. officials warn: Stay clear of Iraqi food" "Estimates say over 100 soldiers getting sick each week"

Variety of news on Page 1: Overall there were 1,183 headlines or pictures on Page 1 in the 200 front pages reviewed. It was no surprise that 359 stories or 30.4 percent of headlines — at least one story a day and a second three out of four days — involved the Iraq war. The 359 represented 55 breaking news stories; 164 military (staff-produced); 93 foreign; and 47 national.

The breakdown of nonwar stories that compose the other 69.6 percent of the total showed variety and, no surprise, sports led the list. It was:

- Sports — 19.4 percent of the overall total

- Military (staff-produced) — 17.8 percent

- Entertainment/features — 17.3 percent

- National — 6.7 percent

- Foreign — 4 percent

- Miscellaneous other — 1.7 percent

- Business — 1.5 percent

- Disaster/crime — 1.2 percent

Headline tone and accuracy: The tone and text of the headlines reflected care in balancing informative, declarative and accurate — but not being dull and/or boring. In an exercise of nipping it, I found less than a dozen that could have used a rewrite.

On the positive side, I found a good number of headlines that made you want to read the story while avoiding exaggeration and/or being provocative.

Those that stand out include:

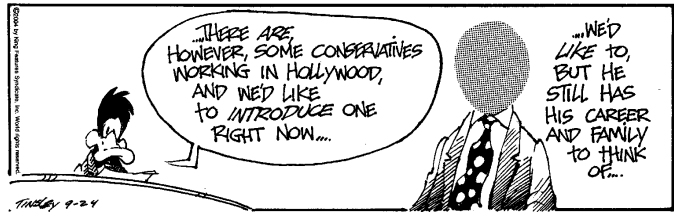
- "Building the road to danger"
- "Combat stress: 'the silent enemy'"
- "Poker in a high-stakes environment"
- "Staying a step ahead"
- "Oprah takes stock of booming success"
- "Memory of late coach motivates softball team at Marine Forces"

In summary, the front pages in this report reflected the mission of being the hometown paper overseas for the military and care in the selection of the news items featured and the writing of the headlines.

Send comments to Joe Ungaro at Ombudsman, Stars and Stripes, 550 M St. NW, Suite 300, Washington, D.C. 20045-1301; phone civilian (202) 462-5488; (202) 462-5489; or e-mail ombudsman@stars.osd.mil

Mallard Fillmore

BY BRUCE TINSLEY



Fake class scheme

CA SANTA ANA — Nearly a dozen former or current community college employees allegedly concocted off-campus classes in order to inflate enrollment and collect more than \$2 million in state funding, according to a newspaper report.

The alleged schemes have resulted at least 10 community college employees in Southern California who have been placed on trial or whose actions remain under investigation. The Orange County Register reported.

The newspaper's review found officials from the community colleges often collaborated with non-profit organizations, businesses and even public agencies to provide unregulated classes — some of which were never held.

In some cases, the employees kept the money for themselves.

Gay dad custody case

ID BOISE — The Idaho Supreme Court has ruled that sexual orientation should not be the basis for custody decisions, but still denied a gay father's bid for custody.

Gay-rights advocates hailed the decision as a guide for future custody cases, but expressed disappointment that it did not help Theron McGriff gain custody of his two daughters.

The court said in a prepared statement that sexual orientation should be considered for custodial purposes only if the orientation is shown to cause harm to the child. "Sexual orientation, in and of itself, cannot be the basis for awarding or removing custody," the court said.

But in its 4-1 ruling, the Supreme Court said there was still sufficient evidence to support a county magistrate's 2002 conclusion that McGriff's ex-wife, Shawn Weingartner, was best suited for sole custody of the children.

Pack animal access

DC WASHINGTON — Seeking to head off environmental groups that want to limit access to federal lands, House lawmakers won approval of legislation to assure that people can continue to use pack and saddle animals in their visits to parks and wilderness areas.

With passage of the bill, said Rep. Steve Pearce, R-N.M., of the House Resources Committee, the House is "preserving one of the most fundamental and truly historic ways to experience our public lands."

The legislation, passed by voice, assures that pack and saddle animals will have access to lands where a historic tradition speaks to such use. Relevant secretaries are to issue rules to define the meaning of that historic tradition.

Church fair accident

MA BOSTON — A pair of improperly bolted caused an amusement park ride to break apart at a church fair, killing one person and injuring two others, the state's commissioner of public safety said.

The accident happened Sunday on the Sizzler ride at St. Mary's Church and parochial school in Shrewsbury, 40 miles west of Bos-



AMERICAN ROUNDUP

ton.

Andrew R. Fohlin, 38, died after he was thrown from the ride and hit his head on the pavement. Two others were injured. All three were residents of a nearby state-run home for the mentally retarded.

Commissioner Thomas Gatzunis said the car in which Fohlin was seated was attached with two bolts — one was too small and the other had been altered, and neither met the manufacturer's specifications. The small bolt broke, causing the footrest and lap restraint to come loose, Gatzunis said.

Cigarettes stop thief

PA BETHLEHEM — A 62-year-old gas station cashier chased off a would-be thief by hurling cartons of cigarettes at him, police said.

The assailant entered the Texaco gas station on Stefcio Boulevard Tuesday wearing a T-shirt over his head and wielding a silver pen, police said.

The man told cashier Lorraine Roth to "open the cash register ... I don't want to have to kill you," according to police.

Roth then threw the cartons of cigarettes at the man until he ran off. Police later determined that the same man had robbed another convenience store in Allentown.



Looking for a bite

A trawler passes in the distance as vacationer Mark Spears, of Ohio, fishes for "anything that will bite" on the beach on Hilton Head Island, S.C.

Kids cause fire

WY RIVERTON — Firefighters were close to containing a fire apparently sparked by children that blew out of control and destroyed dozens of vehicles, several outbuildings and tons of hay at a livestock barn.

Nine people, including seven firefighters, suffered minor injuries, officials said. Residents of about 80 homes were allowed to return home after being evacuated.

"I'm guessing about a million-dollar fire loss," Riverton Fire Marshal Matt Lee said. "It appears to be children being careless with fireworks," Lee said.

It was not immediately clear if any charges would be filed.

Porch collapse

IL CHICAGO — A three-story porch collapsed on Chicago's southwest side as three people were trying to steal a stove that was on it, authorities said.

Two men wounded in the collapse and a woman were in police custody but no charges had been filed, police said. Both of the men were hospitalized, one in critical and the other in serious condition.

Authorities were investigating the cause of the collapse.

Orangutan's new digs

HI HONOLULU — Rusti the orangutan was on his best behavior, as Honolulu Zoo officials announced he may finally be getting a new home more like his natural habitat.

A Big Island foundation presented a large gift to the popular primate during a news conference in front of the outdated gorilla cage he's been living in for the past several years.

The \$100,000 donation from The Chelsea Foundation will be added to \$200,000 already contributed by the Orangutan Foundation International and the city toward building a new habitat at the zoo for Rusti.

Rusti arrived at the Honolulu Zoo in 1997 for what was to be a temporary stay after the Orangutan foundation removed him from a private New Jersey zoo. Rusti had been living in unsanitary conditions and braving the New Jersey winter without heating.

Mad Tacker caught?

GA DALTON — Authorities say they've nailed The Mad Tacker.

Robert Holcomb had a sharp grudge against police and now he's accused of criminal damage for allegedly throwing nails on the roads in front of the police station and jail for more than six months.

Holcomb, dubbed The Mad Tacker by police, is blamed for flattening tires of at least seven sheriff's patrol cars and seven personal vehicles of Whitfield County 911 Center employees.

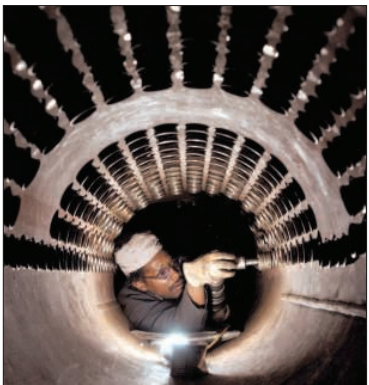
"Sooner or later, he got just about everybody," said sheriff's Maj. John Gibson.

Holcomb, 35, was arrested after an officer spotted him dumping nails on a street near the county jail. He was charged with first-degree criminal damage to property, damaging government property, first-degree criminal trespass, littering and interference with government property.



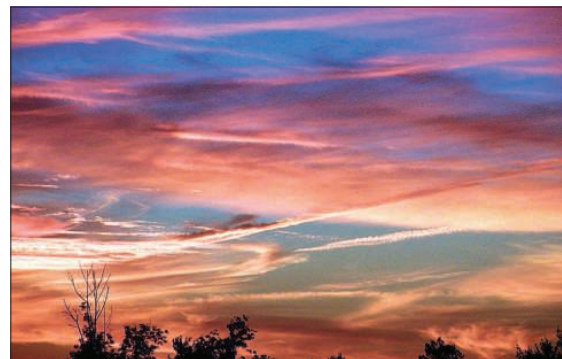
Really into TV

Matt Miller, assistant manager at Westcoast Fitness in East Bremerton, Wa., cleans television sets at the gym, while on TV a poker player studies his hand.



Close quarters

Greg Beaver puts the finishing fit on small tubes connecting to a larger one inside an industrial boiler at Rentech Boiler Systems in Abilene, Texas.



Beautiful beginning

On the last evening of summer, residents of Oswego, N.Y., were given a colorful farewell to summer and the entrance of fall colors.



Native beauty

Wearing an elaborate headdress of pheasant and macaw feathers, Jorge Medina of San Jose, Calif., dances on the National Mall at the start of the Native Nations Procession to help dedicate the new National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C.



Wagon bling

Dick Belt, right, takes his great-grandson, Tyler, for a ride in his custom-made, motorized, monster Radio Flyer wagon in New London, Conn.



Leading the pack?

A groundhog stands in the path of a girls cross country race in Union Vale, N.Y. The critter eventually moved as the runners approached closer.

Fatal fishing fight

NY NEW YORK — A man died after becoming involved in a scuffle with another man while he was fishing at a pier in Brooklyn, police said.

The incident began when a man approached a unidentified 31-year-old man while he fished off of Canarsie Pier at Rockaway Parkway. The two got into a dispute and both of them fell into the water.

A third man, an unidentified 23-year-old, jumped into the water after them, along with off-duty 69th Precinct Capt. Daniel Carione, 37.

Carione recovered the second man, and held him until emergency workers took him to Brookdale Hospital, where he was listed in stable condition. Carione was taken to Jamaica Hospital and also was in stable condition.

The first man, also unidentified, was recovered by harbor police and taken to Brookdale Hospital, where he was pronounced dead.

The third man left the water by himself and refused medical attention.

Hospital lays off 45

SC ANDERSON — AnMed Health officials laid off 45 employees and reduced 14 others to part-time status in cost-saving measures at the hospital. The board of directors unanimously passed a budget that covers the opening of a new cancer center and women and children's hospital.

Hospital officials said about half the laid-off workers could find work at the new facilities next spring.

Recording train info

NE OMAHA — Union Pacific plans to attach digital cameras and microphones on its locomotives to record each trip and any accident that might happen along the way.

The Omaha-based company, which according to its Web site has more than 7,000 locomotives and is the largest railroad in North America, is in the process of finding a company to install the cameras and is working out details such as cost and how precisely the system would work.

A New York Times story published in July said the company failed to properly report fatal accidents along its tracks. Immediately after the article was printed, Union Pacific said it would develop a camera system, said company spokesman John Bromley.

The cameras would be mounted outside the engineer's cab and would be used with the event recorders, already on the company's locomotives, that track the actions of the engineer much like a black box on an airplane.

Debris cleanup at issue

AZ PHOENIX — Some Navajos say they want debris left from a 1956 collision of two airliners over the Grand Canyon removed, calling it long-neglected trash.

But federal officials aren't sure that the debris is from the collision of a TWA Super Constellation and United Airlines DC-7 that killed 128 people aboard the two planes.

"We're not in the position to look into this at this point," said Ted Lopatkiwicz, a spokesman for the National Transportation Safety Board. "With the aviation wreckage, I don't know if the airlines have any responsibility to clean it up."

Nearly 50 years after the accident, residents say a large airline tire remains embedded near charred limestone rock about 5,000 feet above the canyon's rivers on a plateau on Navajo land.

1,000 stings kill man

IN FORT WAYNE — A retired zoo director died after he was stung about 1,000 times by European yellow jackets when he fell onto their nest from a ladder while cleaning windows at his home.

Earl Wells, 75, had been in a coma at Lutheran Hospital since the Sept. 12 attack near Hunters-ton, about 10 miles north of Fort Wayne.

Wells was the director of the Fort Wayne Children's Zoo from its opening in 1965 until his retirement in 1994 and had served as a consultant in the design of other zoos around the country.

European yellow jackets swarmed Wells when the stapheroid was standing on to wash windows collapsed onto their underground nest, the zoo said in a statement.

School district wins big

CA LOS ANGELES — A California school district won \$500,000 from The Broad Foundation, earning half of the nation's top prize in public education.

The Garden Grove Unified School District in Orange County was recognized by the foundation for improving student test scores while closing achievement gaps between white and minority students, as well as affluent and low-income students.

More than 100 urban districts nationwide were eligible for the \$1 million Broad Prize, which is awarded annually.

"We're very thrilled and gratified for being chosen," Garden Grove spokesman Alan Trudell said after an award ceremony in Los Angeles.

Barge traffic resumes

TN CHATTANOOGA — The Tennessee Valley Authority allowed barge traffic to resume on the Tennessee River after floodwater from Hurricane Ivan moved through the lake system. TVA stopped commercial traffic on the 652-mile river so it could lower reservoir levels for expected heavy rains from storms spawned by Ivan.

No charges in collision

WY CHEYENNE — No charges will be filed or citations issued in last month's chain collision on Interstate 80 that left at least four people dead and three others whose remains were never found presumed dead, authorities said. The investigation found that 36 vehicles with 66 people were involved in seven crashes along a foggy stretch of the highway near Buford between Cheyenne and Laramie.

Stories and photos from wire services

FACES

Buy lunch with an 'Idol' on eBay

"American Idol" finalist Diana DeGarmo is available for lunch.

Proceeds from an auction for the lunch will go to the Partnership Against Child Abuse, a program of the Children's Advocacy Center based in Huntsville, Ala. The auction is being held on the Web site eBay.

The 17-year-old from Snellville was the runner-up to Fantasia Barrino in the popular Fox television singing competition. DeGarmo has been touring with other "Idol" alums, and she hopes to have her new full-length CD out by the end of the year.

The lunch will be held in Los Angeles or New York. DeGarmo has one year to make good on the dining opportunity, although she'll make every effort to work with the auction winner, according to the auction instructions.

Griffith to unveil statue for show

Andy Griffith comes home to Mount Airy, N.C., on Friday, when he unveils a TV Land statue that's a copy of the one that the cable network placed in Raleigh last fall.

The statue shows Sheriff Andy Taylor (Griffith) and his son, Opie (Ron Howard), from the '60s sitcom "The Andy Griffith Show" walking to the fishing hole.

It will be placed outside the Andy Griffith Playhouse, which once was the Rockford Street Elementary School that Griffith attended.

Griffith's visit will mark the start of the 15th annual Mayberry Days festival. Fans of the show came in search of Mayberry, the fictional town that TV producers say was based on a combination of Griffith's hometown of Mount Airy, nearby Pilot Mountain and other areas of North Carolina.

Israeli writer Oz nabs Ovidius prize

Amos Oz, a leading Israeli writer and a well-known peace activist, has been awarded the Ovidius prize by Romania's Writers Union.

He won the \$10,000 prize because of his literary merit and his peace work, Eugen Uricaru, president of the Writers Union, said Tuesday. He also said Oz's writings demonstrate interethnic tolerance and devotion to the concept of freedom of expression.

Oz is best known for "My Michael," one of his many novels. He also has written several short stories and numerous articles on the conflict in Israel. His family emigrated to Israel from Russia and Poland.

Performers for AMAs announced

R&B singer Usher, whose album "Confessions" steamed up the charts with songs about sex, affairs and breakups, will perform at the American Music Awards.

Usher has a leading four AMA nominations. The awards will be presented Nov. 14 in Los Angeles.

Kanye West, Josh Groban, Jessica Simpson, Toby Keith, Kenny Chesney and Gretchen Wilson also are scheduled to perform, it was announced this week.

Jimmy Kimmel will host the show, to air live on ABC.

Shatner filming in Kirk's 'hometown'

Capt. James T. Kirk came home to Riverside, Iowa, this week.

William Shatner, who played the commander of the starship USS Enterprise in the '60s "Star Trek" series, arrived Tuesday to hold auditions for four small parts in a low-budget, sci-fi movie he wrote with "Star Trek" co-star George Takei and director Nimrod.

The working title of the movie is "Invasion Iowa." Shatner called the film "his baby," and said he's dreamed of putting the story on the big screen for 30 years.

Although Kirk's hometown was never mentioned in the TV series, Gene Roddenberry, the show's creator and executive producer, wrote in "The Making of Star Trek" that Kirk was "born in a small town in the state of Iowa."

The Riverside City Council picked up on the idea in March 1983, declaring a site behind what used to be the town's barbershop the "future birthplace" of Kirk.

Stories and photos from The Associated Press

Betting on Bettany

Will 'Wimbledon' turn the actor into a star?

BY LUANNE LEE

Scripts Howard News Service

British actor Paul Bettany thinks it was his role as the screaming Geoffrey Chaucer in "A Knight's Tale" that first captured America's attention. Bettany, 33, followed that up playing the mysterious friend in "A Beautiful Mind" and the ship's surgeon in "Master and Commander."

But it's his latest role, as the aging tennis champion in "Wimbledon," which opened in the States on Sept. 17 — that will probably make him a star.

Bettany's father is an actor, his mother is a singer, and he's married to Oscar-winning actress Jennifer Connelly (whom he met on "A Beautiful Mind"), he's the father of a 1-year-old boy and stepfather of a 7-year-old boy.

He talks about his career and life:

What he likes about acting:

"I have the impulse it's probably a sort of awful and childish want to entertain people, I suppose. I also get to learn things, lots of different things, I get to learn little bits of skill — a little bit of the cello or a little bit about the natural sciences or a little bit about tennis. When the writing's good I get to learn a little bit about people, so I guess that's what."

Uneasy in his shoes:

"I still think that somebody's going to come and knock on the door and say, 'I'm sorry we meant Paul Bettany,' and I go, 'Of course, I'm really sorry. Here's all the stuff back.' I'm not convinced that it's not all going to go wrong."

Finding roles:

"What I don't like, it's a very recently happened. You get offered a job, it happened by mistake on 'A Beautiful Mind.' They offered me the job and (director) Ron Howard hadn't read me. I remember being really nervous because I thought, 'You don't know what you've bought. You're going to see me work and then go, 'Oh, no, let's sack him.'"

"Whereas if I've auditioned for somebody I kind of think it's their fault, if I'm not what they want (he laughs) because they chose me."

Critical moment in his life:

"The death of somebody very close to me. Obviously for every human being, their first real contact with death is awesome, and I mean that in a non-L.A. sense of the word. A shock." (Bettany says it was a relative but won't say who. His younger brother died in a fall when he was 9.)

Maturing through marriage and children:

"It gives you the most incredible perspective. It's funny actually, when you experience death, you're convinced that that's given you per-



Paul Bettany and his wife, Jennifer Connelly, attend the world premiere of "Wimbledon" at the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences in Los Angeles, Calif., on Sept. 13.

spective, everything seems clear. In actual fact, what made everything really clear — it's actually slightly warped because it's about fear and it's selfish — birth is actually what gave me real perspective."

What observing death taught him:

"I'm a materialist in the sense that I accept the things I can touch and see. I don't believe in life after death for the same reason I don't believe in Santa Claus, and such thoughts and emotions just end? How can that end? And we're worried about ourselves. You mean our personality is just going to stop and not continue?"

It can't be. So it makes complete logical sense to me that people create [God]. But facing it as a material-

ist, I think that's the bitter pill you swallow in life. And everything can be a daily heartbeat; the thought that one day your children will die. That face that fills you with joy, it too will end."

How he got off drugs:

"I just quit. I couldn't do the 12 steps, [because of the religious aspect]. I did it really logically. I stopped and started again a lot before I stopped. I wanted to get myself together and fall in love and have kids."

Once I stopped, life started getting better pretty immediately. It coincided with me getting a film called "Gangster No. 1" which was the start of a film career for me. And I was straight and able to do a good job."



Horoscope

Big Daddy Jupiter pays a visit to Libra, where he'll stay for the next year. This transit brings luck to anyone who's trying to make relationships work — couples, groups and teams are like geese that fly south in a "V" formation. The momentum they create together carries the group much faster than any one goose could go alone.

Joyce Jillson



TODAY'S BIRTHDAY

(September 24). New social connections help you make your way up this year! You are widely accepted and loved, and having close friends helps you see the way to financial and romantic opportunity. The exceptional work you turn in this November puts you in the spotlight. A promotion and more money follow. Singles feel secure with loving Leo and Scorpio.

ARIES (March 21-April 19).

You're first in line and will have the rewards of the early bird. On days like this, you wonder why anyone would ever be late! Saying "good-bye" is something you've got to do tonight. Be thoughtful and brief; don't dither it out.

Taurus (April 20-May 20).

The stars give you the chance to reinforce to the world who you are. Your decency causes you to automatically respond correctly and kindly when tough situations arise. Games of chance are featured tonight.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21).

Somewhere you go, you bring a jovial mood and a joke or anecdote. Though few may say it out loud, your effervescent personality is appreciated. That's why you'll be invited to socialize with the "it" crowd.

CANCER (June 22-July 22).

Somewhere you go, you bring a jovial mood and a joke or anecdote. Though few may say it out loud, your effervescent personality is appreciated. That's why you'll be invited to socialize with the "it" crowd.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22).

That person who has really come to depend on you is probably on the

verge of taking advantage, as far as you're concerned. You'll find subtle ways to get your message across without causing too many waves.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22).

You use your money-making skills for the good of a group, and everybody wins. Being of service is always a lucky move. Pay attention to your reservations. When did growing your intuition ever get you anywhere good?

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23).

It's a pleasure to give yourself over to your creative inspiration. If your idea is rejected initially, that only means it needs more work. Solve problems, repair and property problems. Big profits are made from little but consistent efforts.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21).

Today is about trial and error, so lighten up on yourself. Failure is just a signal that your current method is not going to work right now. There's nothing personal or shameful about that, unless you choose to see it that way.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21).

Without risk, there is no reward. If you later find out you're in something over your head, you'll have time tonight to think things over. Loved ones won't judge you, so it's safe to talk about what you're going through.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19).

Legal issues play a part now. Any arrangement that involves a contract or implies an unspoken agreement has legal implications. Get everything in writing. Playing the "I thought you said" game could cost you money.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18).

Developments in a key relationship will make you feel at ease. Now, you can think of yourself for a change. It's a challenge to get any work done, unless your job relies heavily on chatting up the customers and being jovial.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20).

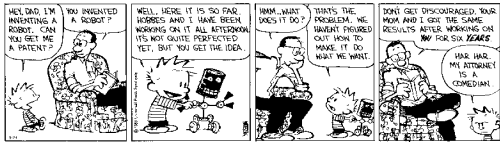
You're down on yourself again. Take the role of the loving parent to your own fragile feelings. You are as deserving of love as any soul on the planet. Tell yourself this often, and your life will transform.

Creators Syndicate

Peanuts



Calvin and Hobbes



Jump Start



Zits



Cathy



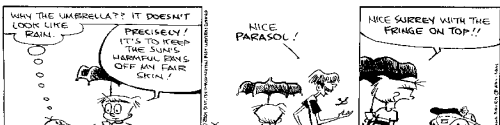
Hi and Lois



Beetle Bailey



Red Rover



Better or Worse



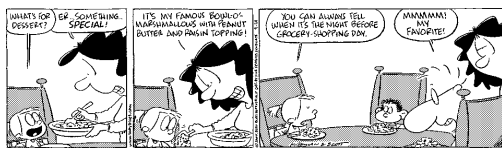
Fotrot



B.C.



Baby Blues



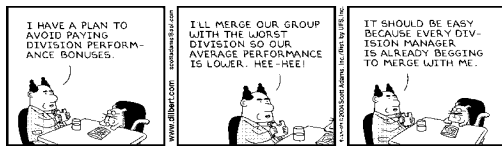
Spider Man



Blondie



Dilbert



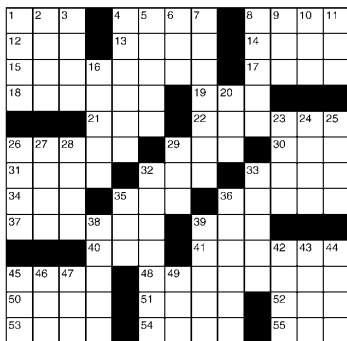
Hagar



Garfield



Eugene Sheffer Crossword



Across

- 1 The whole ball of wax
- 4 Serve as umpire
- 8 Jet forth
- 12 Meadow
- 13 Vicinity
- 14 50 percent (Pret.)
- 15 Mount —
- 17 Bridge position
- 18 Put aside
- 19 Buy now, pay later
- 21 Author Fleming
- 22 Mount —
- 26 Watergate woes
- 29 Foundation
- 30 Historic time
- 31 Relaxation
- 32 Aachen article
- 33 Wilander of tennis

Down

- 1 Charitable gift
- 2 Walesa of Poland
- 3 Victoria, for one
- 4 Pugilist's surface
- 5 "Stormy Weather" composer
- 6 Grant foe
- 7 Intermediate stop
- 8 See-through
- 9 Shell-game need
- 10 Type squares
- 11 Humor
- 16 "New York in June, ..."
- 20 Become one
- 23 Within reach
- 24 Doggie-bag contents
- 25 Poet Ogden
- 26 Muumuu accessories
- 27 Apiece
- 28 On the brink
- 29 Plead
- 32 Chart
- 33 "Call Me —"
- 35 Bake-sale grp.
- 36 "Chances Are" singer
- 38 Be frugal
- 39 Catalogues
- 42 "Damn Yankees" vamp
- 43 Eye part
- 44 Trio from Connecticut?
- 45 Crib
- 46 Expert
- 47 Bagel topper
- 49 Half of dos

Answer to Previous Puzzle



9-24

CRYPTOQUIP

R U XFN DMOX O TGOMB
FJ O ULBTCMX DFMRTCB
DROJF, XFN ERPCK PF ULFE

G K F T C R J R J P G.
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF YOU KEEP DREAMING THAT YOU'RE TAKING A SMALL DRINK, IS THAT A FREUDIAN SIP?

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: F equals O

Cheater puts wife at crossroads

Dear Abby: Last week I kicked my husband out of the house. "Joel" and I have been married four years and have a 3-year-old son.

Two years ago, Joel took up with "Connie," a 20-year-old single co-worker. He insisted they were just friends.

When I found love letters from Connie in his car, Joel swore the letters were not from her. Things got messy when I started checking my husband's cell phone bill and discovered he was calling Connie several times a day. Upon checking further, I learned that some of his co-workers also thought something was up.

When Joel learned I'd been asking questions, he became very angry. Then Connie started calling him at the house at all hours. Once, around midnight, she got into a tangle with some guy and instead of calling police, she called Joel — who rushed right over.

Dear Abby



He says he doesn't want a divorce, but every time we talk, we end up fighting because he tries to twist the facts around to make me look like a fishwife.

Should I wait it out to see if Joel will come home to his son and me? Or should I cut him off, divorce him, and pray that God will send me a man who will give me the respect and love I deserve?

— **Spurned Wife in Texas**

Dear Spurned: The first thing your husband appears to be a remorseless manipulator. You have asked me to make a decision for you that only you should make. Counseling can help you to determine what you want and need to do.

Dear Abby: I am a single mother with two daughters, 2 and 4. I love them with all my heart, but I'm afraid my yelling is affecting them. I can't control it, and when I do it, I frighten

them. They cover their bodies and start to cry. I have never hit either of them.

This is causing huge fights with their father. He is very involved with them, and he sometimes yells but they don't react the same way.

I feel like a bad mother and monster. What can I do to stop myself from losing my temper and have a better relationship with my daughters?

— **Fearful in Minnesota**

Dear Fearful: The first thing you must do is get to the bottom of what's triggering your anger. In the meantime, when you feel you're about to blow your stack, leave the room. If necessary, go outside for a few minutes. Count to 10 — slowly. Decompress. Get a grip.

Once you have calmed down, you'll be better able to act in an adult and rational manner, rather than react.

Letters for this column — with your name and phone number — should be addressed to Dear Abby, P.O. Box 6940, Los Angeles, CA 90069. Readers can write to Abby on the Internet at: <http://www.uxpress.com/dearabby>

JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

NOJIT

EBOES

SHORUC

MASALB

www.jumble.com

A: THE

Yesterday's Jumbles: FRIAR NIPPY JOSTLE ATTAIN

Answer: When Gramps paid to fill his tires with air he considered it — "INFLATION"

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

by Henri Arnold and Mike Argrillon

Put 'em in the back



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, suggested by the above cartoon.

(Answers tomorrow)

Friend divorcing terminally ill spouse

Dear Annie: My husband and I have been friends with "Bill" and "Karen" for many years. Last year, Bill was diagnosed with a terminal illness and is now undergoing experimental therapies that are very painful, physically draining and extremely expensive. He can no longer work.

At first, Karen rose to the challenge and supported Bill, but now she has decided to file for divorce. She claims the problems in their marriage began long before his diagnosis, but I'm not buying it. Over the years, I've seen Karen leave a fiancé, a friend and an employer when things didn't go planned.

I have to draw the line somewhere. Divorcing a terminally ill man when he needs his wife the most seems inexcusable to me. Karen tells me she knows this is the right thing for her. She doesn't say whether it's right for Bill.

I was there when Karen promised to stay with Bill "in sickness and in health." My husband thinks we should write off our friendship

Annie's Mailbox



with her. I'm inclined to agree. What do you think?

— **Disillusioned Friend in Massachusetts**

Dear Disillusioned: Karen certainly isn't showing much integrity or loyalty. She runs away when the burden weighs too heavily.

There may be ingrained psychological reasons for this, but it doesn't make her behavior any more acceptable.

Only you can decide if Karen has other qualities that make up for her abandonment of Bill, and if so, you can continue the friendship on that limited level. Meanwhile, please keep an eye on Bill.

Dear Annie: I'm a teacher, 54, divorced, and I live out West. I make an excellent salary and have great benefits. The problem? My entire family, two married daughters, a grandchild, parents, siblings, nieces and nephews, all live in the Midwest. I have no close ties with anyone here, and it's

often very lonely.

I am considering retiring early in order to move closer to my family. However, that would mean leaving a job I love and giving up an excellent retirement program, medical coverage, etc. It would be extremely difficult and exhausting to start over, should I be lucky enough to get hired. I want the financial security, but my heart is calling me home.

— **Apple Valley, Calif.**

Dear Apple Valley: Can you live on the benefits you may get if you retire now? Can you put aside money and travel home more often? Could you manage with part-time employment? Do some research on the job situation in the Midwest and consider all options. While you are deciding, try becoming more involved in activities to meet people at your current location. Give it a shot before giving up.

Annie's Mailbox is written by Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar, longtime editors of the Ann Landers column. Please e-mail your questions to anniesmailbox@comcast.net, or write to: Annie's Mailbox, c/o Creators Syndicate, 5777 W. Century Blvd., Suite 700, Los Angeles, CA 90045.

Creators Syndicate

Family Circus

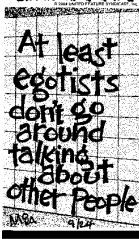


9-24

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One Spring Feature Drive
www.familycircus.com

"Grandma said in the old days people got into this thing and you wouldn't have to listen to them talk."

GRAFFITI



Domis the Menace



© Gary Larson

The Far Side



Non Sequitur



SCOREBOARD

AFN TV & Radio

Friday

AFN-Atlantic, 1:30 a.m. — College football: Miami at Houston.
AFN-Sports, 1:30 a.m. — Baseball: Philadel-

AFN-Sports, 4 a.m. — Baseball: Oakland at Texas.

AFN-Sports, 2 p.m. — Pro football: NFL Films Game of the Week (dtd).

AFN Sports, 10 p.m. — Tennis: Davis Cup

Hamilton will keep cycling gold medal

The Associated Press

GENEVA — Tyler Hamilton will keep his Olympic cycling gold medal because a backup drug test was inconclusive, the International Olympic Committee said Thursday.

Hamilton tested positive for signs of blood doping in the initial A sample Aug. 19 after his time-trial victory in Athens.

But analysis of the B sample failed to confirm the original finding because of "lack of enough intact red blood cells," the IOC said in a statement.

As a result, the IOC said it dropped its investigation into the case and "would not be pursuing sanctions regarding this matter."

Hamilton's pro team, Phonak, which on Wednesday announced the different blood test results, has threatened to sue Hamilton if he can't prove his innocence, and on Wednesday said it suspended him.

However, Hamilton said on the team's Web site Thursday he is still a member of the team and will continue to take part in its day-to-day decisions.

One of Hamilton's B samples confirms the finding of the A sam-

ple test at the Spanish Vuelta on Sept. 11, which showed evidence of blood from another person, the Phonak team said.

Hamilton said Tuesday he was innocent and denied ever receiving a transfusion, which can boost an athlete's performance by increasing the amount of oxygen-transporting red blood cells. He repeated the denials Thursday. If Hamilton is ultimately found guilty of doping, it would be the first case related to a blood transfusion.

Cycling's governing body had informed cyclists at the start of the season that it planned to start using a new blood-screening machine in the tests that detects blood transfusions, human growth hormone and synthetic hemoglobin. Until now, there has been no foolproof test for detecting blood transfusions.

Phonak plans to investigate the accuracy of the new tests.

"Since the new method is an effort based on probability and interpretation measurements, uncertainties will remain in this examination and procedure in any case," Phonak said.

"The team's goal is, and this is



Olympic time-trial cycling champion Tyler Hamilton of the United States had blood tests come back with different results.

in the exact interest of Tyler Hamilton, that we have clarity in the end," it said. "The team management believes that it can form part of the campaign against blood doping and bring this matter up to a worldwide acceptable level."

Hamilton pulled out midway through the 2004 Tour de France because of a back injury and was fourth in the 2003 Tour.

He also withdrew from the Vuelta on Sept. 16, citing stomach problems. He acknowledged Tuesday he partly did so because of the positive test.

Sixers center MacCulloch retires

The Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Todd MacCulloch always knew his career would end. He just never expected it to come to such a sudden and mysterious stop.

"I wish this was somewhere down the road," said MacCulloch, who retired Wednesday from foot pain that sidelined him the last 1½ seasons. "I never envisioned this to happen at this point, but we don't always get to choose those kind of things."

MacCulloch hasn't played since Feb. 2, 2003, because of a disorder believed to be Charcot-Marie-Tooth disease, a genetic disorder that disrupts his balance and causes problems with his feet.

"I feel like it's still a rollercoaster and there's times when I can't think about anything else and I feel like they're never going to get better," MacCulloch said. "Then they might be quite a bit better and things don't hurt as much."

MacCulloch, 28, had surgery in January on his left foot to free a crushed nerve, leaving him hopeful of a recovery and perhaps a similar procedure on his right foot. Instead, there was no progress.

"This is the day I hoped we'd be talking about 10, 12 years down the road," Sixers President Billy King said.

While doctors told MacCulloch his symptoms resembled CMT, they have never come up with a specific diagnosis, leaving the center depressed and confused. Not knowing what's wrong or why it's happening is still hard for MacCulloch to accept.

"I'm not sure if there's anything that's there, there's not a genetic test that's available for it," he said. The 7-foot MacCulloch was Philadelphia's second-round pick in 1999. After two seasons with the Sixers, he signed with New Jersey, then was traded back to Philadelphia in 2002 along with Keith Van Horn in the deal that sent Dennis Mutombo to the Nets.

He had his best season with the Nets in 2001-02 when they reached the NBA Finals. He averaged 9.7 points and 6.1 rebounds in 61 games.

MacCulloch averaged 6.1 points and four rebounds in 223 career games and two trips to the finals.

Willis, 42, returns to Hawks

ATLANTA — Kevin Willis joined his original NBA team Wednesday after a 10-year absence, look-

ing to free the Atlanta Hawks inside depth at age 42. Willis is entering his 21st season in the league and is second among active NBA players in games played (1,290). The 7-foot-6 center was a reserve for San Antonio last season and is expected to play behind center Jason Collier this year.

"I think this is a great opportunity as my career covers two decades in the league," Willis said. "To be back with the franchise I started my career with is a wonderful thing, and I hope to do whatever I can get to make more excitement and positive energy to the team."

In 11 years with the Hawks, Willis averaged 14.5 points and 10.0 rebounds. He was the team's first-round pick in 1984 and was an All-Star in the 1991-92 season, when he averaged 18.3 points.

Among active players, only Karl Malone (1,476) has played in more games.

Wizards guard Blake out 10-12 weeks with ankle injury

WASHINGTON — Washington Wizards point guard Steve Blake will miss the first month of the season after injuring his ankle in a pickup game.

Blake underwent surgery Wednesday to remove a chipped bone from his right ankle and is expected to miss 10-12 weeks, which would rule him out of the final 13 games of the regular season.

"It is an uncommon injury, but we expect Steve to make a full recovery," president of basketball operations Ernie Grunfeld said.

At a 60-minute season, Blake played in 75 games, started 14 and averaged 5.9 points and 2.8 assists. He was a second-round draft pick after leaving Maryland as the school's career leader in assists.

Sonics sign Turkish swingman

SEATTLE — The Seattle SuperSonics signed 30-year-old Turkish guard Ibrahim Kutlay on Wednesday.

The 6-foot-6 Kutlay is expected to help fill the void left by free agent Brent Barry, who signed with San Antonio.

Kutlay, the captain of Turkey's national team, scored 19 and 26 points in exhibition games against the United States leading up to the Athens Olympics.

R. Gordon on probation by team

The Associated Press

WELCOME, N.C. — Robby Gordon has been placed on probation by Richard Childress Racing for the remainder of the 2004 NASCAR Nextel Cup season after admitting he intentionally caused an accident last Sunday at New Hampshire that involved championship contenders Tony Stewart and Jeremy Mayfield.

Team owner Childress made the announcement Wednesday, apologizing to fans, media, the teams involved and Circular Wireless, the sponsor of Gordon's No. 31 Chevrolet, for the stunt that occurred during the Sylvania 300.

"If there is one positive," Childress said, "I think you can see Robby understand that there is more to racing than just being aggressive. In this sport today, one action can affect many people's lives on the track and beyond it, as well."

"Many athletes have made mistakes in their careers and would like to back the negative things they've said or done if they could."

Gordon was angered 17 laps into Sunday's race when Greg Biffle caused him to spin. After radioing to his crew that he would retaliate, he made good on the threat by intentionally wrecking Biffle later in the race.

Stewart and Mayfield could not avoid the accident, and their cars were severely damaged. Mayfield finished 35th and Stewart 39th, and neither will likely be able to overcome their resulting point deficits in the final nine races of NASCAR's new 10-race playoff format.

NASCAR immediately hit Gordon with a two-lap penalty. NASCAR officials later said no further penalty against Gordon was planned.

Gordon made a public apology on Tuesday, admitting he wrecked Biffle while "trying to even the score."

Also Wednesday, RCR said that Ron Hornaday, a two-time NASCAR Craftsman Truck series champion, will not be re-signed for 2005 Busch Series.

"We had two great years with Ron, and I wish him the best in the future," Childress said. "We talked about next season and beyond and it was in our best interests to make this announcement now to give him the best chance possible to catch on with another team."

Hornaday has two victories and 28 top 10 finishes in 60 Busch starts for RCR. He finished third in the driver standings in 2003 and currently is sixth.

Third La Salle player charged with rape

PHILADELPHIA — A third La Salle basketball player has been charged with rape in connection with an alleged 2003 sexual encounter with a female player from the school that was reported to coaches at the time but not to police, officials said.

Dazilo Larkai, 22, a forward

Sports briefs

who attended high school in England, surrendered Wednesday on rape and related charges, said Sgt. Sean McGinn of the Philadelphia Police Department's special victims unit.

Larkai had ties with the university served after his arrest, La Salle spokesman Joe Donovan said.

The case — combined with the July arrests of teammates Michael Cleaves and Gary Nely, who allegedly raped a severely intoxicated female basketball camp counselor — led to the resignation this summer of La Salle's men's and women's basketball coaches.

Larkai's alleged victim played on La Salle's women's team, prosecutors have said. She told authorities this year that she had informed both women's coach John Miller and men's coach Billy Hahn about the alleged assault during the time, but at the coaches' urging declined to file charges.

Hahn and Miller have denied that account, saying they kept quiet to honor her wishes.

NCAA inched end transfer penalty

INDIANAPOLIS — NCAA football players could have five seasons of eligibility and would be allowed to transfer once without penalty if two new proposals are approved next year.

The NCAA's Championships/Competition Cabinet forwarded the measures to the Board of Directors during a two-day meeting that ended Wednesday in Indianapolis. The committee also approved a proposal that would permit Division I-A schools to again add a 12th football game starting in 2006.

Athletes who play football, basketball and hockey are now required to sit out one full year before becoming eligible at the next season. Athletes on other sports are not penalized by sitting out a year, NCAA spokesman Jeff Howard said.

Final votes on the measures cannot occur before April.

Rangers drop appeals, suspensions rejected

ARLINGTON, Texas — Texas Rangers relievers Frank Francisco, Doug Brocail and Carlos Almanzar dropped their appeals Wednesday of suspensions that stemmed from the altercation with fans near the Texas bullpen in Oakland last week.

Each suspension was reduced by one game, the Rangers announced at the start of their game against the Athletics.

Francisco threw a plastic chair into the stands near the visitors' bullpen in Oakland that broke the nose of a woman whose husband had been heckling throughout the Sept. 13 game. Francisco started serving his 16-game suspension Saturday, pending an appeal.

Almanzar began serving his four-game suspension Wednesday after a fight with a fan in the stands Sunday, the day Brockton will begin his six-game suspension.

Razorbacks pass over rushing this season

BY JAY HUGHES

The Associated Press

FAYETTEVILLE, Ark. — For the past two seasons, Arkansas quarterback Matt Jones has directed an offense that led the Southeastern Conference in rushing.

This year, with Jones the only returning offensive starter, the Razorbacks have changed their approach. Now they lead the SEC in passing.

Coch Houston Nutt said in the preseason that the offense would open up this year to keep defenses from stacking the line to stuff the run. He's kept his word, and it seems to have worked in wins over two nonconference opponents and a two-point loss to No. 5 Texas.

"[The defenses] are giving us some one-on-ones, and we have to take advantage of what they give us," Nutt said.

The Razorbacks (2-1) open conference play Saturday at home against Alabama (3-0, 1-0).

So far, Arkansas has thrown for 892 yards and eight touchdowns. That's even more than traditionally pass-happy Florida.

The Razorbacks are averaging 297 yards per game in the air, up from 189 last season.

In 2003, Arkansas used an experienced and talented offensive line, anchored by All-American tackle Shawn Anderson, and powerful tailback Cedric Cobbs to average 241 yards per game on the ground.



Quarterback Matt Jones is the only returning offensive starter for Arkansas, which entered the weekend ranked first in the SEC in passing.

All those players are gone.

Nutt's strategy to open up the running game this season by throwing more seems to be working, too. Arkansas is averaging

228 yards per game on the ground this year — second best in the SEC behind Alabama with 241.

Senior receiver Steven Harris

said the offense is basically the same, it's just playing to its strengths.

"I think the pass has opened up the run rather than vice-versa," said Harris, who is third in the SEC in receiving yards per game with 10 catches for 218 yards and two touchdowns.

Last season, Ryan Sorahan rotated into the game in many obvious passing situations, sometimes with Jones split wide as a receiver.

Jones took most of the snaps on running downs.

This year's passing game was developed to take advantage of Jones' height (6-foot-6), speed and a throwing arm that Nutt has repeatedly said is underrated. Jones is a dynamic runner, but has never been considered a reliable passer.

Many of Arkansas' passing plays are designed to make defenses stop Jones two ways, with him rolling out and either targeting a receiver or tucking the ball and running.

Jones has 716 yards passing and 185 rushing to lead the SEC in total offense.

"His statistics speak for themselves," Alabama coach Mike Shula said. "He's a playmaker. He's going to be a guy our defense has got to somehow find a way to contain or slow down."

Jones said it doesn't matter to him whether he throws or runs.

"As long as we're winning, the

game's fun for you whether you throw the ball 210 times a game or 10 times a game," he said.

With his long, lanky strides, Jones often looks almost like he's loafing when he drops back into the pocket. Mostly, he relies on deceptive quickness and fancy footwork to dance away from trouble.

Jones said he feels like he's been well-protected by a rebuilt line.

"They're real athletic, and they've done well," he said.

"The coaches have done a good job getting them some schemes to execute."

Last year's two leading receivers, George Wilson and Richard Smith — are gone. But Jones said turnover on the offensive side of the ball also brought some unexpected benefits in the overall receiver corps.

"There's nothing that takes the place of experience," he said. "But as far as taller receivers and faster receivers, we have more depth."

For example, 6-6 freshman Marcus Monk has six catches for 126 yards and three touchdowns. On at least two occasions he has outreached defenders to snatch deep passes of the air. Junior Carlos Ousley has nine catches for 102 yards.

Harris, who had 19 catches for 315 yards and one score last year, is on pace to eclipse that this season.

"There's totally different from what I've experienced before this year," he said.

Southeastern Conference never short on highlights, intrigue

BY CHRIS DUFRESNE

Los Angeles Times

The "Jerry Springer" show is more over-the-top than the Southeastern Conference, but not by much.

It is beyond doubt that the conference is, top to bottom, the nation's best, with five schools ranked 16th or higher in this week's Associated Press poll.

The problem — if you could call it one — is that the SEC takes its football so seriously that minor issues become major and major issues become rip-snorters.

This is a league in which member cities are apt to name institutions of learning after coaches instead of U.S. presidents, although what Tuscaloosa child wouldn't be proud to attend Paul W. Bryant High School?

Hurricane Ivan?

It was even of a monster last week to cancel games in the South — California at Southern Mississippi, for example.

But no Category 3 hurricane was going to shut down football in America's Conference. The league issued a release late in the week that stated: "All SEC football games on Saturday to be played as scheduled."

You got that right, brother.

39-year-old receiver Tim "Pope" Frisby if he is ruled eligible by the NCAA Clearinghouse.

He thought for sure Holtz would gray-shirt Frisby and bring him back in 2005.

It gets even better in the SEC when they actually play games.

Last week, the conference boasted two

knock-down, flag-out thrillers in Florida at Tennessee and Louisiana State at Auburn.

Tennessee eked out a two-point win on a 50-yard field goal with six seconds left. Florida later learned SEC game officials botched the clock on the final drive and gave Tennessee more time than it deserved.

They'll curse this year in Gainesville and write songs about it in Knoxville.

LSU and Auburn were tied 9-9 in the final minutes when Auburn kicker John Vaughn missed what would have been the go-ahead extra point.

Officials, though, called a penalty on LSU defensive back Ronnie Prude, who was trying to block the kick, for falling on the Auburn center.

There's a new rule this year saying you can't do that.

LSU coach Nick Saban serves on the committee that enacted the rule.

Saban voted against it.

Given a second chance, the Auburn kicker made the extra point and Auburn won 10-9.

So, Auburn is 3-0 under coach Tommy Tuberville, who was so close to getting fired last year that the school president got on a private jet and secretly interviewed Louisville coach Bobby Petrino for a job opening Auburn technically didn't have.

Alabama, meanwhile, has the most horrific 3-0 record in school history because second-year coach Mike Shula let star quarterback Brodie Croyle start the third quarter against I-AA Western Carolina with Alabama comfortably ahead 31-0.

On the drive, Croyle tore knee ligaments and is now sidelined for the season.

Shula knew the injury was bad because "it happened right in front of me."

This had to be followed by Shula's seeing his career flash right in front of his eyes.

This week, the big games are Alabama at Arkansas, Kentucky at Florida and Mississippi State at LSU.

Georgia has a week off.

Frankly, we can all use the rest.

Penalties by number gets mixed review

In another rule change this year, officials are identifying players who commit penalties by number, just like in the pros.

So how is the new rule going over with players and coaches? Opinion is mixed.

"I don't like it at all," USC coach Pete Carroll said. "It's for the wrong reason. It just falls into the category of 'Let's point the finger at somebody so we can cast the blame.'"

UCLA coach Karl Dorrell has a different take, saying, "I don't think it's that big of a deal. If anything, it makes the players think that this is how they do it in the pros."

Verle Sorgen, the Pacific 10's coordinator of football officiating, says the new rule makes referees more accountable for their decisions.

"I hope the official on the field, knowing that he has to get a number, will take that extra split-second to make sure it's a penalty, not just glancing at it and going on to other officiating duties."

UCLA linemen coach Spencer Havner wonders what the fuss is about.

"I haven't even noticed it," he said. "You can't hear the refs make calls on the field, so it really hasn't been a big deal to me. But I think that it's a good thing."

College notebook

Mighty: Eckel, Polanco lead Midshipmen's running start

MIGHTY, FROM BACK PAGE

away Tulsa last Saturday 29-0, its first shutout of a Division I-AA opponent since 1980. Heady stuff, but Johnson isn't overly excited about being unbeaten in September.

"We can still lose eight games," he said.

Johnson came to Navy after an amazing five-year run at Georgia Southern, where he went 62-10 and won two Division I-AA championships. His success at Navy can be attributed to hard work, a solid coaching staff and an uncanny knowledge of the finer points of the triple-option attack.

The triple option is the great equalizer for the Mids because it does not require bruising linebacks to open holes. It's all about making the defense guess whether the quarterback, tailback or fullback is going to end up with the ball.

"We've got smart guys. They're not dumb. They can look on the



KRT

Navy senior quarterback Aaron Polanco (6) has rushed for 309 yards and amassed 591 total yards in three games this season.

other end of the field and see who's bigger," Johnson said. "But they understand how we win. We've got some good athletes and we play hard."

Polanco has done well in Candelo's place, running for 309 yards in three games and throwing for 282 yards on just 16 attempts.

Eckel has flourished too; he ran for three touchdowns against Tulsa and is on course to become only the third Midshipman to amass 3,000 career rushing yards.

"We've been running this offense for a long time," said Johnson, who served as Navy's offensive coordinator in 1995-96, "and a lot of different guys have had success."

The hope is that the run will continue. "As long as coach Johnson is here and the players react to what he's teaching them," Polanco said, "this program will be a winner."

Making a stand by sitting

Dodgers OF Green will miss at least one game to observe the holiest day on the Jewish calendar

Shawn Green is anguishing over the same conflict that confronted Hall of Famers Sandy Koufax and Hank Greenberg.

The game or the synagogue? A pennant race or prayers?

In Green's case, he's torn about missing two critical games for the Los Angeles Dodgers against the San Francisco Giants on the holiest of the Jewish Holy Days, Yom Kippur, from sundown Friday night to sundown Saturday.

Should he play one game and abstain from the other, seeking a compromise in his commitments to his team and his faith? Should he play both games or attend services, fast and refrain from work in solemn observance of The Day of Atonement?

Will he be criticized one way or another? No doubt, but he has to answer only to himself.

"It's a really tough deal," Green said Wednesday night before the Dodgers lost to San Diego 4-0 and saw their NL West lead over San Francisco shrink to a half-game.

"I've bounced back and forth and am just trying to do the right thing. It's hard to know what that is. I've really been toying with two different options: Play one of them or not play at all. I will miss at least one game."

To play or not to play on Yom Kippur is a personal decision for a Jewish ballplayer that can have a larger impact.

"It strikes a chord with each one of us who has to wonder, 'What do I do in this situation? Do I go to work? Am I going to observe my faith in a very visible way? Or do I just go with the flow?'" said Rabbi David Fine, Pacific Northwest regional director for the Union for Reform Judaism.

Koufax and Greenberg won the everlasting affection of American Jews, and the respect of many non-Jews, by observing Yom Kippur rather than playing in big games — Koufax in the 1965 World Series as pitching ace of the Dodgers, Greenberg in the 1934 pennant race as the slugger for the Detroit Tigers.

"It's not quite a profile in courage, but it's still a courageous stand," said Fine, who grew up in Detroit hearing about Greenberg long after the last of his 331 home runs and his 58 in 1938. "It's when baseball players really become heroes in the eyes of those of us who watch them. It's when they go beyond good players to being real examples and role mod-



AP

With the Los Angeles Dodgers in a tight pennant race, Shawn Green is trying to decide if he will miss one game or two to observe Yom Kippur, the Jewish Day of Atonement. Green, who said he will sit out at least one game, entered Thursday hitting .267 with 27 home runs and 81 RBIs.

els."

Koufax attended synagogue in Minnesota instead of pitching in Game 1 of the '65 Series against the Twins. Don Drysdale pitched that day and gave up seven runs in 2½ innings. When manager Walter Alston came out to pull him from the game, Drysdale cracked, "I bet right now you wish I was Jewish, too."

Greenberg wrestled with whether to play on Rosh Hashana, the Jewish New Year. He spoke to his rabbi about it, got a dispensation to play, and hit two homers that day. The Detroit Free Press ran a banner headline, in Hebrew, that read: "Happy New Year, Hank."

On Yom Kippur, the pennant not quite clinched, Greenberg sat.

"Greenberg's decision electrified the American Jewish community, and generations of people remember that with incredible pride," said Martin Abramowitz, who recently helped the Hall of Fame organize "A celebration of Jews in baseball."

The world has changed in 70 years — Green doesn't have to face the same anti-Semitism that Greenberg did. But the issues are the same and it's still a matter of a man examining his principles and conscience.

"Greenberg's choice [was] how to balance loyalty to parents, religion, and tradition with commitment to his American profession and his desire to fully participate in American life," historian Peter Levine wrote.

Sitting out on Yom Kippur made Greenberg a model for second-generation Jews struggling with similar issues at work.

Green, who sat out on Yom Kippur three years ago and ended a streak of 415 games played, is making an impact even as he considers doing it again in a more cru-

cial situation for his team.

"In some ways it's a contribution not only to the American Jewish community but to America to have the spotlight on someone who is publicly responding to a question of his religious obligation," Abramowitz said. "That in itself is a gift for us all."

Green has 27 homers this season and is the most accomplished of 10 active Jewish players. He was among the 143 ballplayers honored during the Hall of Fame celebration. Another, former Oakland pitcher Ken Holtzman, told of his refusal to dress for a game on Yom Kippur in the 1973 playoffs against Baltimore.

He was surprised when a limousine arrived at his Baltimore hotel on Yom Kippur morning to whisk him to a synagogue, where he was escorted to the front row and welcomed by Orioles owner Jerry Hoffberger.

Holtzman must have found some blessings because he won the next game 2-1 with a three-hitter over 11 innings.

Ron Blomberg, who won trivia fame by becoming the first designated hitter, was also among the Jewish players celebrated by the Hall. In 1971 at Yankee Stadium against Cleveland, he, too, chose to sit out on Yom Kippur and became known as "the Sundown Kid."

"It was ... nearing sundown at home, the game, two outs in the bottom of the ninth with a man on third base," Blomberg told the Long Island Press. "I'm up. If I don't do it, we go past sundown, and if we go past sundown, I'm going to have to leave. I hit a single to center field and we won the game. From that day on I was idolized by every Jew in the city."

Steve Wilstein is a national sports columnist for The Associated Press. Write to him at swilstein@ap.org.

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Giants move within half-game of Dodgers

San Francisco stays ahead of Chicago in wild-card chase as big weekend looms

The Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Noah Lowry is fitting in perfectly in the San Francisco Giants' rotation.

The 23-year-old left-hander threw a five-hitter Wednesday night in San Francisco's 5-1 victory over Houston to improve to 6-0 in 13 major league starts, the second-longest career-opening winning streak by a starter in franchise history.

"He has composure and mound presence well beyond his years," said Ray Durham, who helped back Lowry with a two-run double.

San Francisco moved within a half-game of first-place Los Angeles in the NL West and maintained a half-game lead over the Chicago Cubs in the wild-card race. The Giants are 9-1 in their last 10 games, with Lowry winning three times.

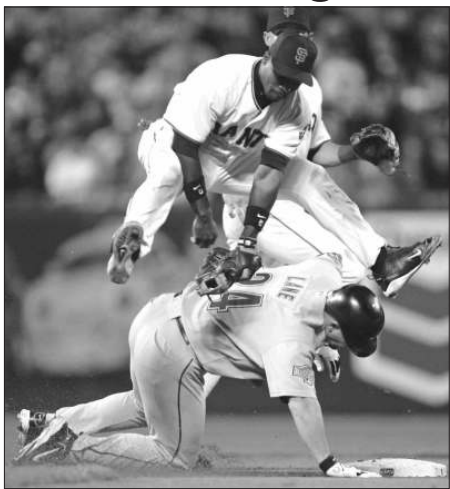
"Right now, the energy in the clubhouse is really high," Lowry said. "We're catching fire and all coming together."

Lowry, a former Pepperdine star who made four relief appearances without earning a decision last year, retired 10 of the first 12 Houston hitters, allowing a second-inning solo homer to Jeff Kent and a single to batter.

"Guys told me he had some guts, and he showed it," Kent said.

Lowry's 6-0 mark is the best by a Giants starter since Hooks Wiltse set the major league record in 1904 by winning his first 12 career decisions for New York.

Barry Bonds had an RBI triple in the first, but didn't have a chance to swing after that. He was intentionally walked four times — the fourth time he's been issued four free passes in a game this season. The Giants took the lead in the fifth on Pedro



San Francisco second baseman Ray Durham vaults over Houston's Jason Lane while completing a double play during the eighth inning Wednesday night. San Francisco won 5-1.

Feliz's RBI single that scored Durham from second following a stolen base.

Roy Oswalt (18-10) failed to become the NL's first 19-game winner, allowing 10 hits — his most in 11 starts — and five earned runs in 5½ innings.

Cubs 1, Pirates 0: Carlos Zambrano (15-8) outduelled Oliver Perez (10-10) and beat the host Pirates for the fifth straight time this season.

Sammy Sosa preserved the Cubs' sixth shutout with a sprawling, belly-flop catch of Ty Wigginton's bases-loaded, two-out line drive to right field in the eighth.

Zambrano is the first pitcher to beat the Pirates five times in a season since the New York Mets' Tom Seaver went 5-1 in 1973.

Phillies 12, Marlins 4: At Miami, Pat Burrell hit a three-run homer and Eric Mil-

ton (14-4) won for the first time in more than a month, leading visiting Philadelphia over Florida.

Mike Lieberthal, Jason Michaels and Placido Polanco added two-run homers in the Phillies' second victory in two nights in Florida after 14 straight losses in Miami.

Logan Kensing (0-3) allowed six runs and four hits in 4½ innings.

Reds 11, Braves 8: At Atlanta, Javier Valentin hit a three-run homer to cap Cincinnati's five-run comeback in the ninth off closer John Smoltz.

Smoltz (0-1) gave up four hits and five runs, walked a batter and threw two wild pitches while recording only one out. It was his fifth blown save in 45 chances this season.

Phil Norton (2-5) recorded one out in the eighth to win it.

Cardinals 3, Brewers 2: Larry Walker hit a two-run homer in the fifth, lifting St. Louis over the host Brewers.

Woody Williams (11-7) gave up one run and seven hits in 5½ innings. Jason Iraheta worked the ninth for his 44th save.

Ben Sheets (11-13) struck out eight and had 245 strikeouts this season, passing Teddy Higuera's franchise record of 240, set in 1987.

Mets 3, Expos 2: Mike Piazza's RBI single in the eighth helped visiting New York end a three-game losing skid and kept the Mets from falling into the tie for last place with Montreal in the NL East.

New York moved two games ahead of Montreal for fourth place. The Expos have been in last place since April 15.

Bartholomeo Fortunato (1-0) pitched two scoreless innings for the victory in his first major league decision. Luis Ayala (6-12) was the loser.

Rockies 4, Diamondbacks 2: Shawn Estes outpitched Randy Johnson, and Jeromy Burnitz hit his 37th homer to lift host Colorado over Arizona.

Estes (15-7) allowed two runs and six hits in seven innings to set the team record for wins in a season by a left-hander.

Johnson (14-14) gave up eight hits in seven innings, but still lowered his ERA to 2.67 by allowing no earned runs. It was the seventh time this season Johnson has lost after giving up two earned runs or less.

Better late than never as Boston comes back again

The Associated Press

BOSTON — Orlando Cabrera flung off his helmet, stepped on home plate and was mobbed by his teammates after leading the Boston Red Sox to another dramatic victory.

The celebration capped a tirade 24 hours for Cabrera, who flew all night from Colombia to Boston after leaving the team for two days to be with his ailing wife.

He was back in the starting lineup Wednesday night and homered off Rick Bauer (1-1) in the bottom of the 12th inning, and the Red Sox to a 7-6 victory over Baltimore.

Boston's second straight victory in its last at-bat.

"I slept the whole night on the plane," Cabrera said. "From Bogota to New York — six hours."

Cabrera's wife, Eliana, underwent an undisclosed surgical procedure this week.

"I was thinking about taking another day because my wife needed me to stay another day," he said. "I kept saying, 'I got to go. I got to go.'"

AL Roundup

The shortstop made sure manager Terry Francona knew he was back in Boston — and ready to get back in the lineup.

"Once I landed in Boston, I went to my apartment and called Terry and left a voicemail saying 'I was here and that I wanted to play.'"

On Tuesday night, Mark Bellhorn's two-out, two-run single in the bottom of the ninth lifted the Red Sox to a 3-2 victory.

Boston, which leads the AL wild-card race, moved within 3½ games of the first-place New York Yankees in the East. The teams play a three-game series in Boston over the weekend.

Curtis Leskanen (3-5) worked out of a bases-loaded jam with one out in the top of the inning for the victory.

Baltimore loaded the bases with one out against Leskanen, but

the Red Sox turned a 3-2-4 double play on Jay Gibbons' grounder when first baseman Doug Mientkiewicz threw home before Jason Varitek fired to Pokey Reese, covering first.

David Ortiz gave Boston a 6-5 lead with his 40th homer in the seventh, but Rafael Palmeiro had a pinch-hit homer leading off the ninth against Keith Foulke to tie it. It was Palmeiro's 549th homer, moving him into 10th place on the career list ahead of Mike Schmidt.

The Red Sox loaded the bases with one out in the ninth, but Jason Grimsley got Cabrera and Bill Mueller to ground into fielder's choice grounder.

"Can't hang your head, not the way (we) played," Baltimore manager Lee Mazzilli said.

Blue Jays 5, Yankees 4: Vernon Wells hit a go-ahead, two-run triple off Orlando Hernandez in the seventh as Toronto rallied past the host Yankees.

New York built a 3-0 lead on Bernie Williams' two-run homer

in the first and Ruben Sierra's solo shot in the second off Ted Lilly (12-10). Williams' drive gave the Yankees six hits in the 20 or more homers for only the second time in their history, the first since 1961.

Hernandez (8-1) failed to become the first Yankees starter to win his first nine decisions since Tommy John in 1979.

Mariners 16, Angels 6: Raul Ibanez tied an AL record for a nine-inning game with six hits and Ichiro Suzuki had four more singles to pace visiting Seattle's 24-hit outburst.

Suzuki set a team record with nine hits in two games. He has 247 hits and is 10 from tying George Sisler's 84-year-old record with 10 games left.

The Angels remained 2½ games behind Oakland in the AL West, but dropped 6½ games behind Boston in the wild-card race.

Rangers 5, Athletics 3: Kenny Rogers (17-8) matched a career high with his 17th victory and Eric Young hit his first homer in

more than a year, a three-run tie-breaker that moved host Texas within three games of Oakland in the AL West.

White Sox 7, Twins 6: Paul Konerko hit a game-winning RBI single in the ninth for the host White Sox.

Wilson Valdez led off with a single off Joe Roa (2-3) and moved to second on Aaron Rowland's sacrifice. Roa then walked Willie Harris and Konerko followed with a single.

Royals 7, Devil Rays 6 (10): Ruben Gotay hit an RBI grounder in the 10th for visiting Kansas City.

David DeJesus homered and drove in three runs for the Royals.

Tampa Bay's Matt Diaz hit his first major league home run.

Indians 7, Tigers 6: Johnny Peralta's two-run double keyed visiting Cleveland's five-run seventh.

Josh Phelps homered for the Indians, who came back from a 3-0 deficit a night after overcoming a five-run deficit to win.

Roethlisberger starting to build future

Steelers QB hoping to fare better than past rookies, like Bradshaw

BY ALAN ROBINSON

The Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Ben Roethlisberger knows one thing: His first NFL start can't be much worse than those of the Pittsburgh Steelers' last three rookie starting quarterbacks, including one named Terry Bradshaw.

Roethlisberger was drafted No. 11 in April to be the Steelers' quarterback of the future, only to see that future arrive much more quickly than either he or the Steelers anticipated.

With starter Tommy Maddox (torn elbow ligament) out at least six weeks and backup Charlie Batch (knee) out for the season, Roethlisberger will become the first Steelers rookie quarterback in 34 years to start as early as the third game of the season.

The last to do so? Bradshaw, a Hall of Famer whose debut shouldn't be hard for Roethlisberger to top. Bradshaw was only 4-6-16 for 70 yards in a 19-7 loss to Houston in the 1970 opener, a performance the No. 1 draft pick replicated numerous times while throwing six touchdown passes and 24 interceptions as a rookie.

"I'm just approaching it as a chance to play football, starting again," Roethlisberger said of his Sunday start at Miami.

"Unfortunately it had to come at the expense of someone getting hurt. You never

want that. But you have to be able to step up when your name is called."

The only other Steelers rookie QBs to start since then didn't do much better.

Mike Kruczek was the only one to win, going 5-for-12 for 58 yards and an interception in a 23-6 victory over Cincinnati in 1976. Bobby Brister was 12-for-33 for 191 yards in a 24-22 Monday night loss to Cincinnati in 1986, then started only once more until winning the starting job in 1988.

Kruczek not only won his debut, but his first nine NFL starts — though there possibly should be an asterisk involved. With Bradshaw injured, Kruczek was mostly asked to hand the ball to dual 1,000-yard running backs Franco Harris and Rocky Bleier and get out of the way. He was supported by arguably the best defense in NFL history, one that had five shutouts and allowed only 28 points in those nine games.

The Steelers aren't adopting a "Let's save the rookie" attitude like those 1976 Steelers did, if only because they know it is necessary. Roethlisberger showed what he could do by throwing two touchdown passes in less than two quarters after Maddox was hurt in a 30-13 loss Sunday in Baltimore.

"He has all the attributes of being a great quarterback in the league," wide receiver Plaxico Burress said Wednesday. "He can throw the ball 70 yards in the air,

he can make all the throws. I think he is going to be just fine."

So does Hines Ward, who leads the NFL with 250 yards receiving. He successfully adjusted to a quarterback change two September games ago when Maddox took over for Kordell Stewart, but he said changing quarterbacks during the season can be chaotic.

"It's tough but, at the same time, you've got to be disciplined about it," he said. "If I go out there and run my routes, it's up to the quarterback to put the ball in my hands. I can't go out there and try to compensate for Ben. When you do that, turnovers start to happen."

"I just do my job, regardless of who the signal caller is."

Former All-Pro guard Alan Faneca was criticized for saying he "wasn't excited" about the change, but Faneca insisted he wasn't being critical of the rookie.

"What is there to be excited about, your starting quarterback being hurt in the second game?" Faneca said. "I have confidence in Ben. I saw him today while I was working out and I told him, 'The comment had nothing to do with you.' I definitely don't think it's a desperate situation."

Neither does Roethlisberger, the former Miami, Ohio, star who set numerous Mid-American Conference passing records. He knows a Dolphins defense that has allowed the second-fewest yards in the league will throw a lot at him, but he feels ready for it.



Pittsburgh Steelers quarterback Ben Roethlisberger will become the first Steelers rookie quarterback to start as early as the third game of the season.

"The biggest thing is not necessarily how I play, but that we win. That's my No. 1 goal," Roethlisberger said. "I could be the worst quarterback out there, but if we come out with a victory, that's all that matters to me."

Mike Kruczek could tell him all about that.

RB James held out, upgraded

The Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — Indianapolis Colts running back Edgerrin James was upgraded from doubtful to questionable for this week's game against Green Bay despite missing Wednesday's practice with a strained hamstring.

Coach Tony Dungy said James worked out earlier in the day but was held out of the afternoon practice. Dungy said Thursday's practice would help clear up James' playing status.

"I would not anticipate him playing, but if he practices tomorrow, that would be a step toward playing," Dungy said. "If he can't practice, that will tell us something else."

James was injured on a 30-yard touchdown run that sealed the Colts' 31-17 victory at Tennessee on Sunday. After the game, James said he was fine. But an MRI exam on Monday revealed damage, and Dungy said it was doubtful he would play.

Less than four hours later, James was running through light drills and said he still hoped to play against the Packers.

The Colts (1-1) were making contingency plans, though.

If James doesn't start, Dominic Rhodes will. Rhodes rushed for 1,104 yards — an NFL record for

NFL injury update

Injuries to prominent NFL players, following last week's prognosis on Page 24 for complete injury report provided by the NFL.

QB: RB Kevin Barlow (knee) practiced Wednesday.

Falcons: RB Warwick Dunn (knee) did not practice Wednesday, questionable for Sunday.

Texans: QB Carl Powell (knee) underwent arthroscopic surgery.

Seahawks: CB Charles Tillman (knee) out for Sunday.

Ravens: CB Deion Sanders (hamstring) out for Sunday.

Steelers: QB Ben Roethlisberger, questionable for Sunday.

undrafted rookies — when he replaced James for the final 10 games of the 2001 season.

"I don't know what's going to happen, Edg says he's feeling great," Rhodes said. "He knows I'm excited, I want to get that chance and I'm ready to help out."

Doctors clear Brees to play

SAN DIEGO — The only time Drew Brees got a headache on Wednesday was when he recalled what usually happens to the San Diego Chargers in Denver.

"The last two years we haven't played very well up there," Brees said shortly after declaring himself ready to start Sunday's road game against the AFC West rival Broncos.

Brees was cleared by the team's medical staff three days after receiving a mild concussion in last weekend's 34-28 home loss to the New York Jets, and took his regular number of snaps in practice.

"Today was a lot better," said Brees, who was in for 12 plays after getting hurt, even throwing a 33-yard touchdown pass.

"From not doing anything Monday or Tuesday, obviously getting back throwing today, maybe just a little lethargic in the beginning. But once I got going it was fine."

The Chargers have won only 11 times in Denver since 1960, and only twice in the last 10 years.

Johnson angry over Vermeil remark

BY DOUG TUCKER

The Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Larry Johnson reacted sharply to Dick Vermeil's comments that the seldom-used Kansas City Chiefs running back "take the diapers off" if he plays this week in place of injured Priest Holmes.

Johnson, a first-round draft pick out of Penn State, might be pressed into action Sunday against Houston if Holmes is still hobbled by a sore ankle. He has expressed his unhappiness over not playing, and on Wednesday he dismissed the suggestion that Vermeil was trying to motivate him with comments made in his weekly news conference.

"I don't need no motivation," Johnson said. "If I need motivation, I'll talk to my father. I don't need another grown man telling me I need to take the diapers off."

"That's not how I've been raised, and I don't need no motivation from anybody. I'm self-motivated because my father taught me to be that way."

Johnson has played sparingly behind Holmes, even dropping to third team behind Derrick Baylock. Larry Johnson, his father, is defensive line coach at Penn State.

"I don't really listen to that kind of stuff," the younger Johnson said of Vermeil's comments. "If the man can't say something in my face, that's how I feel. It doesn't mean nothing to me."

Vermeil has criticized Johnson in the past for a casual approach toward preparation and made the remark when asked about the possibility of Holmes missing Sunday's game.

"If I need motivation, I'll talk to my father. I don't need another grown man telling me I need to take the diapers off. That's not how I've been raised, and I don't need no motivation from anybody."

Larry Johnson

Kansas City Chiefs running back

Vermeil, whose team (0-2) has already been beset by distractions and injuries, said the remark "just popped into my scrambled head."

"He's got some pressure on him now because if Priest doesn't play, he's going to be carrying a load, and it's a lot of responsibility that so far he has a way to go to prove he can handle it," Vermeil said. "And I'm looking forward to giving him the opportunity if Priest can't play."

Although the comment was made in jest, "in a way, there's a little truth to it," Vermeil said.

"I like Larry and I see his talents. And I've spent more time with Larry Johnson than all my roster combined in the last two years, and so has everybody else in this building. And sooner or later, he's going to recognize that," Vermeil said.

Vermeil made it clear the day Johnson was drafted that he would have preferred to take a defensive player. But Holmes was coming off hip surgery, and the organization decided it needed insurance at running back.

Last season, Johnson had 20

carries for 85 yards, including a 15-yard touchdown run.

"Yes, it's a little frustrating when they bring you here and they can't tell you whether you're going to play or you're not going to play," Johnson said. "That's just how I feel. By no means I'm going to stop going hard here and going hard every day in practice. It's just something that's frustrating right now and would be to anybody who's in my position."

Vermeil said he understands Johnson's frustration.

"The kid wants to play football badly. He loves to play," Vermeil said. "But in this league they just don't automatically retire Priest Holmes."

"He has all the talent in the world," Vermeil said of Johnson, "and sooner or later, he'll have his opportunity to take advantage of it."

Asked if the statement would have an impact on his relationship with the coach, Johnson said, "It affects a lot of things."

"But that's between him and me to figure that out. There's a lot of things going on that I want to address but I want to wait to the right time for me to do that."

SPORTS

From pushover to mighty mite



Fullback Kyle Eckel (32), the workhorse of Navy's triple-option offense, is on pace to become only the third Midshipman to rush for 3,000 career yards. He has helped power Navy to its first 3-0 record since 1979.



QB Roethlisberger seeks to stop a trend in his first start for the Steelers, Page 30

After years of losing, Johnson has Navy bowling people over

BY DAVID GINSBURG
The Associated Press

ANNAPOLIS, Md. — With a 3-0 record for the first time in 25 years, Navy has proved it's possible to win without a 300-pound lineman or an athlete whose sole purpose for attending college is to hone his skills for the NFL.

"We're not the biggest guys, but we play with a lot of heart," quarterback Adam Polanco said. "Coach stresses that for us to win, we have to be in better shape and play harder than the other team."

When Paul Johnson accepted the daunting job as Navy's football coach in December 2001, the Midshipmen had enjoyed two winning seasons in 19 years. Johnson knew he couldn't alter the academy's stringent entrance requirements or arduous military obligations, so he set out to change the one thing he could control: the sense of doom that shrouded the once-proud program.

"I think the hardest thing was getting the attitude and work ethic changed," Johnson said this week. "But I think we've got the work ethic back. These guys work pretty hard. Like I tell them, it is more you invest, the harder it is to lay down."

Their diligence has paid off. Navy went 8-5 last year and played in the Houston Bowl. Suddenly, tailgating and the pregame fly-by isn't the only attraction at Navy-Marine Corps Memorial Stadium on autumn Saturday afternoons.

"The school, the town, everyone's into it now," senior fullback Kyle Eckel said. "The atmosphere is better when you win."

Last year we picked up a lot of fans, and now the ball's rolling. It's catching on."

Johnson took over a team that went 1-10 in 2000 and 0-10 in 2001. Navy won its first game in 2002, then dropped 10 straight before beating Army in the finale.

"That first season was the longest year of my life," Johnson recalled. "I felt like we were getting better; we just weren't winning any games. Certainly it's nice that all the hard work has paid off for everybody."

Said Polanco: "It's great to get some recognition. It helps recruiting, helps the program. It's a lot better feeling than the seniors had here their first year. Those were rough years."

The resurgence began in earnest last season, when Navy beat Air Force and Army to win the Commander in Chief's Trophy for the first time since 1981. Led by senior quarterback Craig Candeto, who ran for 1,112 yards and 16 touchdowns, the Midshipmen rolled to their first winning season since 1997.

But could it last? That was the challenge facing Johnson and the Mids this year, and at this point it appears the answer is a resounding, "Yes, Sir!"

"Last year we were fighting to win, fighting for respect, and we got some," Eckel said. "But coming into this season, people were saying, 'Craig's gone, it was a fluke' — things like that. You can't blame them after so many losing seasons. But we've worked hard to keep that respect, and now we're 3-0."

After rolling past Duke and Northeastern at home, Navy blew

SEE MIGHTY ON PAGE 27

Rank and file

Paul Johnson took over as Navy's football coach in December 2001. The following is Navy's year-by-year record for the past nine seasons:

2003	8-5
2002	2-10
2001	0-10
2000	1-10
1999	5-7
1998	3-8
1997	7-4
1996	9-3
1995	5-6



Giants continue ascent in NL West while maintaining wild-card lead; more late heroics help Red Sox pick up a game on the Yankees

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Teammates stay loyal in race for Nextel Cup Page 31



Southern Fried Football: SEC has become the home of drama and controversy

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